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THE GRAVE DIGGER.



THE GRAVE DIGGER:

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SCOTTISH HEIRESS."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
T. C. NEWBY, 65, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH SQ.

1844.


BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

THE GRAVE-DIGGER.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Lord Burleigh and its patrons, and how a stranger came among them.

In one of those deep, narrow lanes that run into Fleet Street, in the City of London—for it is well to adhere to the severe order of narrative, in speaking of places and dates; in one of those ancient regions which reason almost in vain assures us, must at one time have been newly built—courts and alleys of tall dark houses, that have stood for centuries in London smoke;

and which, notwithstanding their tomb-like obscurity, are in reality nearly as well known as the great street of which they are the tributaries—strange places they are, classic ground many of them, the chronicled haunts of familiar names of the past; but now deserted except as devious thoroughfares: standing there in the gloom of their own dimness, with the mingled sounds of the distant street humming continuously among them: in one of those venerable places, there is a well known tavern, of dingy, yet warm and in its way, comfortable appearance, that has a gas light burning in the bar and parlour all day long; a dozing landlord who is only used for references, and giving change for Bank of England notes, a landlady that dresses highly, a barmaid that reads the daily papers, and a waiter that never sleeps. Here have roistered the choice spirits of the two Charles' reigns, for the place was a tavern so late as then—here have sat the wigged wits of Queen Anne's time; the quiet annuitants that

smoked at their clubs, kept diaries of the state of the weather, and were greedy of the news from Turkey and Spain: the red-eared jacobite of later times, waxing warm in his cups, singing forbidden songs, and opening his knee buttons, drinking the Pretender's health in the devoted attitude of zealous humility; the smooth-caned, square-toed stickler for the Protestant succession, who retired every evening at nine of the clock, and gave a loud amen on Sundays, to the prayer for King George, and the pious wish that he might vanquish and overcome all his enemies—the politicians of still later days, of all shades and denominations, from the ale drinking enthusiast for French democracy, to the gouty believer in the divinity of kings; all have been there, and have died, and were buried. But new taverns have started up, clubhouses in political and other matters of tavern controversy, have separated the tares from the wheat; the wits of the playhouse, actors, and their garret dwelling minis-

ters, needy spendthrifts from the Temple, and substantial traffickers from Guildhall, have variously betaken them to other haunts, and the venerable parlour of "the Lord Burleigh," for such is the name by which the reader must be content to know this ancient seat of drinking— is now filled only by newspaper reporters, citizens of the immediate neighbourhood, and idlers of difficult discription. Yet the old room remains unchanged, dark and dingy as of yore, adorned with a venerable portrait of the respectable statesman already mentioned, and filled with a steadfast odour of tobacco, which probably has never left it for a century and a half.

During the day this ancient apartment is comparatively deserted, and has a painful look, like an owl at noon, or a ghost in the sunlight; like Melrose Abbey, it is best seen at night, indeed its natural obscurity at any other time, makes it difficult to be seen at all. But when the evening has set in, and the doors are shut

on the darkness without, when the old room is filled again, when the gas lights burn jocundly amid the tobacco smoke, which driven sharply back from the high dried, testy old ceiling, curls around, and good humouredly jostles them aside, now and then leaving them hardly enough of flame to go on with: when pipe-bowls brighten, and the old portrait, now in its proper light, looks steadily down upon its friends; when the imperturbable waiter, Antony, or as he is pleasantly called by the regular frequenters of the place, "Mark," and sometimes when they are drunk, "Luke," and even "John;" when Mark Antony—for he will answer to any name, as far at least as he ever answers, that is, by rubbing the table with his napkin, turning his eyes to the gas-lights, and uttering the word "Sir," as if it were part of a public proclamation with which he had no personal interest or concern—moves and glances about the room as though the seats were empty, yet taking instinctive note of

every order, gliding in and out with the same impervious answer-the-bell expression of countenance, as if he were a man of no private cares, or thinking on his own account; with the same dress too, the unbrushed domestic looking slippers, whity-brown neckcloth, and olive green coat, fitting him like the coats of private gentlemen in waxwork, that is to say, retaining its own natural shape, and allowing Antony to retain his; when an evening paper is being read aloud, or when a warm debate takes place, in which all become partisans, some by speaking, and others by smoking briskly on their respective sides; then it is, that the parlour of the Lord Burleigh seems brightened again by the glow of its youthful fires, or at least has an aspect in the autumn of life, that becomes it well.

It was even on such a night, at no very distant period from this present writing, that the habitual guests, of the place which has been so carefully described, were assembled

in full force, and entertaining themselves with agreeable communings regarding a matter of rather unusual interest there; it being the mysterious disappearance, as the newspapers titled it, of a young lady of rank and great beauty, which was mentioned in some of the journals of the day. It was however no mere newspaper matter, but a fact quite independent of the press, that a lady of the name of Katherine Brandon—the only child of a gentleman of fortune and family, who represented his native county in parliament, and who, on account of his wealth and old English lineage, added to a severity of pride, which, with all its faults, had always kept him independent—was a person of some consideration with the country and in the house—had, to the extreme mortification of a noble duke, said to be very wealthy and very intelligent (perhaps one of the most striking features of the case), who was known to be a suitor, favoured by her father—suddenly disappeared,

or in other words was said to have eloped; but what was worse and more odious, it was reported that the beautiful fugitive had eloped with a married man! There was to be sure nothing to substantiate so foul a charge, as even the name of her lover was unknown, and she herself had generally been esteemed a model of the feminine graces of character, as well as of person; yet the statement was of an unusual kind to be the legitimate offspring of mere exaggeration; and to those who knew the passionate frailty of women, it seemed hooked in the rumour, more in the odd way of an unaccountable truth, than in the guarded insinuousness of a fiction.

Such was the matter which now disturbed the imagination of the parlour, and even of the bar of the Lord Burleigh, for the landlady and barmaid spoke about it continually, filling the landlord's dreams with indistinct visions of ladies' cloaks, horse pistols, and Bluebeard on his trial at the Old Bailey; while Antony

himself, from his private experience of newspaper matters, began to speculate on the chances of having to prepare a vast number of early breakfasts, on the occasion of somebody's execution, for a crime which he did not quite understand.

At the head of the table, and immediately below the old portrait, sat a stout, well-dressed man, rather under the middle stature, with a red face, a self-important expression of countenance, and a bald head, so excessively smooth that it made one uneasy lest anything should touch it. This was Doctor Antioch, an obscure diplomist of an obscure university—a bachelor, addicted to strong liquors, and speculations regarding the millenium. In addition to his other practice, which arose chiefly from accidents in the streets, and a few straggling patients picked up in taverns, he was the medical attendant of the Lord Burleigh, and had contrived to make himself indispensable to the landlord by daily alarming him about

apoplexy, and to the landlady by a doctrine concerning the preservation of female beauty, which she trusted to, but did not understand. He was very argumentative, and had a genius for patent medicines, occult specifics, and legislating for nature according to a spirit of laws, which he had had the kindness to provide for her. He was also celebrated for his skill in making punch.

By his side was a gentleman about his own age, very negligent in his dress, and whose countenance betrayed more irregular debauchery than the doctor's. His face was indeed rather bloated; of that slightly humid character which is seen to much disadvantage in a clear light. This person stiled himself Pontius Burton, A.M., and strange as it may appear, was a first classman of Oxford; but had turned his attainments and talents to such poor account, that he had now to support himself by correcting the press for reprints of Greek school books, and by indiscriminate

writing for the newspapers. He was well known to the editors of the leading journals, as one of the most useful men on the press, for he could report speeches, when he could hardly speak himself—could write almost on any subject, and certainly on any side of the question; sometimes with much logical force and intellectual vigour, and always with considerable ease and wit: for in politics Mr. Burton was a sort of Dugald Dalgetty, to whom all services were alike—the only subject upon which his own opinions were at all fixed, being the question of imprisonment for debt. And so Mr. Burton rubbed through life in a threadbare coat, having, it must needs be told, no happiness, no friends, no stimulus to exertion, but what the parlour of the Lord Burleigh afforded. He was well known, he was almost respected there; in the street he was looked upon as a *miserable*, a ducker from the daylight into blind alleys, an object of pity or contempt. Yet his countenance, with

all its drawbacks, had the composed look of intellect and education, and an attentive observer, who had seen him walking steadily along the crowded pavement, unconscious as it seemed, of his sadly worn apparel, and public house guise, could have detected nothing of shrinking abasement in his undisturbed, self-reposing glance—nothing in his aspect that might be read—"my distresses make me thus;" but something that almost seemed to say—"it is my pleasure to be so." If it were so, it was a very melancholy one.

On the other side of the table was a stoutly built gentleman aged apparently about thirty-five, with a sunburnt, rosy countenance, a cheerful eye, and a remarkably firm, easy seat in his chair. This was Mr. Horatio Buckhurst, who called himself a clergyman of the church of England, and who had once had legitimate claim to that respectable distinction, at least in its titular relation; having been the incumbent of a snug living in the West of England,

which he had lost, as he affirmed, from feelings of indiscriminating philanthrophy—but of this the reader will presently be able to judge. Mr. Buckhurst was a professed patron of the brute family, if not in some degree an actual member of it. His protection was chiefly extended to bull-dogs, bears, and such like helpless animals, and to this amiable trait in his character, and a pleasant disposition to conviviality, he had to attribute the loss of his cure of souls, with some temporal advantages more *in substantialibus.* The honest rector, like many a confiding young woman, was ruined by a monkey, differing however from a whiskered Adonis, in possessing a decided character, and a longish tail. The animal which was named Doctor Busby, had been in the constant habit of accompanying him to church; and on one occasion having escaped from the reading desk at the beginning of the Litany, was seen, to the no small amusement of the congregation, peering over the pulpit, wrapped in a black gown,

while Mr. Buckhurst and the clerk, unconscious of what was going on above them, were steadily praying that all the nobility might be endued with grace, wisdom and understanding. These and a few other eccentricities of the Doctor, as well as one or two of his master's, such as falling into a grave and nearly burying himself, instead of a respectable member of his congregation—preaching in his drawers on one very warm Sunday, and on the day following, stripping to his shirt-sleeves, and severely beating an exciseman, who had vauntingly told him that it was only his "coat" that protected him — had been charitably overlooked by the bishop; until an unfortunate day, when that dignitary in one of his professional visitations, having urbanely accepted the Rector's invitation to dinner; had first an encounter with a bear, which but for the timely intervention of the gardener with a pitchfork, would certainly have gratified the then reigning minister with the patronage of a vacant see; and

afterwards when a bottle of excellent Madiera, and the bland reminiscences of some highly seasoned gelitinous soup, of which he had largely partaken at dinner, had dissolved nearly all the vindictive irritability of his fright, he was informed by his servant, that Doctor Busby, the rector's monkey, the day being very cold, had actually ensconsed himself up to the chin in this self same soup, when cooling in a large saucepan, at the kitchen door; its usual chatter changed to a whimper of delight at the more than Indian warmth of the retreat it had chosen. It was true, that the cook had violently ejected the creature before the soup went to table, and that its master had been altogether ignorant of the whole affair, that nobody moreover had detected any unusual condimentary element in the enfusion; the rage of the respectable dignitary knew no bounds, he almost wished for the power of the Church of Rome, against which he was one of the leaders of the new crusade, that he might excommunicate

the monkey as well as its master. Old motes in the beams of the rector's ministry were quickly found out, and soon after Mr. Buckhurst was compelled to renounce his living, and in some degree his mode of life, as he afterwards became the driver of a mail coach. From that cheerful avocation he had been ejected by a railroad, and was in a fair way of entering his Majesty's service; as private in a distinguished dragoon regiment; when, just as he was concluding matters over a jug of mellow flip, with a tightly strapped moustachioed serjeant, who assured him that he himself was a gentleman—in disguise; his eye accidentally fell on an advertisement, in an ale stained newspaper on the table, for a teacher in one of the London National schools—he applied for it, and on the strength of being a bachelor of Oxford, although it was said he had two wives in excellent health, he was the favoured candidate; and by means of a long, tight rod, and the vocal energies of a hundred and seventy

boys managed to keep up the high pressure degree of yelling so exceedingly popular in these interesting institutions; he himself declaring that Adam's curse had reached him at last, as he was now compelled to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. He sung a good song, and was an established oracle at the Lord Burleigh in questions regarding sporting matters, church discipline, and the treatment of a bear, which one of the company, a barber by trade, kept under his shop as a formidable witness in favour of the grease which he sold under the animal's name.

The barber, Ganymede Unicorn, was a small man, with a smooth face, trim features, and a perfumed-soap, Burlington Arcade kind of odour about him. He wore very clean linen, short peagreen decencies, large knee buckles, and a drab coat, made like a shooting jacket; in the upper pockets of which a pair of scissors, and a large dressing-comb, were distinctly visible. He wore a pigtail too, and supplied

hair powder to three venerable men in the city, hand-frills on Sundays, and a court dress, (bequeathed him by an alderman, a belted knight, whom he had shaved for thirty years,) when he dressed any of the judges' wigs. He might indeed be called "the last of the barbers," for he retained nearly all the peculiarities of that ancient race. He was in the confidence of a great many old gentlemen, who had not the faculty of holding their tongues, was an inveterate gossip himself, knew the ages of all the royal family, as well as something of surgery, having twice successfully bled to death, and blistered more people into delirium than any man living. He had also, like Dr. Antioch, a turn for specifics, and had some hopes from posterity, on account of an extract of cucumbers, which was intended to cure baldness.

These four always sat together, and the old lord, the presiding genius of the place, after dosing all day on the wall, hardly ever

awoke to consciousness at his accustomed hour in the evening, without finding them there.

Of the other guests much need not be said, either as to what they wore, or what they were. There was an attorney, very unlike attorneys in general, being meek and gentle, who was here however regarded as a familiar spirit from the world of devils—a parish vestryman of some note as an agitator of the "iron hoop nuisance," and the great "orange-peel on the pavement question," an old French officer, who had lost an eye by the frost, in the retreat from Moscow; and one or two taciturn men, who smoked deeply, and from looking night after night on the old portrait, had acquired something of its cast of countenance.

It will not be forgotten that the subject which now engaged the attention of this smoky conclave, was the abduction, seduction, or voluntary frailty of a fair member of the aristocracy; and as this was precisely the sort of subject to disturb the acute curiosity of Gany-

mede Unicorn, he was not only the most frequent speaker, but always restored the conversation to the matter whenever it accidentally became for a moment or two diverted from it.

"I will never believe," said the little barber, "that the lady knew her deluder was a married man, or that the thing was done willingly."

"Then by Gar Sare," said the Frenchman, "how was it done at all?"

"The English aristocracy," said Ganymede with dignity, "go to church on Sundays, and are a different sort of people from the infidel countesses you have known abroad. You can't understand them as I do—it's not to be expected. Never tell me that any genteel young woman of the upper classes would behave so badly—cut herself, as I may say, with her own razors."

"Long experience as a public man," said the vestryman, removing his pipe, "has con-

vinced me that the aristocracy are capable of anything, but paying their debts."

"That is a coarse and vulgar way of viewing things," retorted the barber. "It is distressing to any cultivated mind, to think that so beautiful a creature should come for to throw herself away in this way, just like as if I had lost my senses, and was to throw a prime loin of lamb, with the kidneys, to Johnathan (his bear was called Johnathan Wild)—but it won't bear thinking of. They went the north road too, no doubt going to Gretny Green."

"It's a long road to the Scottish border,'" remarked Mr. Buckhurst, "and for a purpose of that sort, North Wales would have done just as well."

"If they had a license," observed the attorney, "a thing a married man was not likely to put himself in peril by applying for."

"A licence is easily provided for in North Wales," rejoined Mr. Buckhurst—"a copy of an old writ, sir, or a receipt for window taxes,

will pass with many a Reverend Mr. Jones, in those breakneck counties for a special licence. I once knew a man that got married in that way with a game certificate."

"They went by the north road," resumed the barber. "The Sun says they went by the north road."

"The sun is a bad authority in such a matter, as it took place after sunset," observed Doctor Antioch, "and my opinion is, that the newspapers are giving the public too much of this worthless affair. It is but one woman lost, and there are plenty left behind, plenty of them! and they are all alike. They are born and they bear, they do mischief, and they die, some are buried, some are dissected, and others are drowned in packet-ships. There is more fuss made about this wayward baggage, because forsooth she had a smooth skin, and a good anatomical development, than if her *furor amoris*, had established any important truth. I once kept a large toad alive for three weeks

in an exhausted receiver, and not a newspaper could I get to mention it."

"The newspapers in these matters are in some sort exhausted receivers themselves," remarked Pontius Burton, looking up from a slight fit of abstraction, "and so I see is my tumbler. Antony my man of men, your slate abhors a vacuum—replenish, and score—people that owe no man any thing never love one another. Well, Mr. Unicorn, how's your bear?"

"But sadly," replied the barber, in a domestic tone; "he is still very bad with the dyspepsy. Mr. Buckhurst prescribed castor oil; but it's one thing to prescribe castor oil to a bear, and another thing to make him take it. I got in two policemen to assist me, but it was of no use; and now we can't even get up the bottle."

"You should bring him here with you some evening," remarked the ecclesiastic, "the animal wants fresh air."

"Perhaps I may, when his new muzzle is made."

Antony's towel-hand became suddenly arrested. He looked from speaker to speaker for a moment, and having mechanically resumed wiping a remote corner of the table, left the room with an air of profound melancholy.

"This dark affair will one day be brought to light," said the small barber, "although it will be too late then for the poor victim of relying fondness—but that monster in human shape—"

"I wonder why the deuce Mr. Unicorn is so savage about this person," observed Mr. Buckhurst, with some interest.

"Because he is the lion of the day," said Mr. Burton, "and you know between the lion and the unicorn there is a hereditary fence. But, Ganymede, my ambrosial lover of virtue, (thank you, Antony—go in peace) how moves the extract? are cucumbers at a premium? no accidents occurring, eh? nobody forgetting to wash his forefinger after anointing himself at

night, and finding it next morning converted into a tooth brush?"

"Now don't you raise a man's scurf in that way," said the barber angrily.

"Your discovery will raise you a monument, man, a large marble cucumber; and get you a place in Westminster Abbey, or St. Paul's."

"More likely in Saint Luke's," muttered Doctor Antioch.

"The first bottle did all that I expected it would do, to such a head as yours," retorted Mr. Unicorn, "it prepared it for hair. You should have bought a second, perhaps a third, and so on till the hair grew."

Doctor Antioch blushed not only to the brow but to the back of the head, at thus being detected as the secret purchaser of the miserable compound, which he had so frequently railed at, and it is impossible to say what, in his fury, he might have done, had not an unusual noise and bustle in the house, suddenly startled the whole parlour into silence.

The noise alluded to, was that of trunks laid heavily down, and the movement of human feet and furniture rollers, in the room immediately over the parlour; the sharp voice of the landlady in the lobby, and the sounds of heavy footsteps ascending and descending the stairs. By and bye, Antony entered the room, looking perplexed and out of sorts, and in the most laconic manner possible, informed the company that a cab had broken down in Fleet Street, and that the gentleman who was in it, who had just landed from a steam-boat at one of the wharfs, instead of proceeding further had ordered his trunks to be carried to the nearest tavern, and that the Lord Burleigh being so, had been somewhat hastily selected.

It was an unusual thing for travellers to take up their abode there, it was not a house for the reception of steam-boat foreigners, or of every lout who might come to town on the roof of a stage coach, or be shot through the clover fields in the corner of a railway carriage; the

Lord Burleigh was a convenience for the citizens of London, a tavern of their own, a place of convivial resort for people who knew St. Paul's by sight, and the sun by reputation; a domesticated retreat belonging to themselves, no thoroughfare for coach-horn passengers; a carriage could not even approach the door, nor was it ever intended that it should.

By and bye the constrained quavering of a paralytic bell gave forth a dusty, cobwebby sound, and Antony's step, in a reluctant shuffle, was heard ascending the stairs. In a minute or two afterwards, footsteps were heard descending, the parlour door was thrown open, and the stranger entered the room.

CHAPTER II.

Of what passed between Mr. Pontius Burton and the strange guest.

The new guest was a young man, apparently about five and twenty, of a gentleman-like aspect, and an air of unobtrusive good breeding. These were rendered more marked by a countenance, which although handsome, was less strikingly so than manly and pleasing. He was somewhat above the middle statue, and of a frame that indicated active strength. There was something prepossessing, something

high bred about the man—to use an old expression, now only applied to horses—something that told, if not of birth, at least (as some one has nicely termed it) of the "instincts" of a gentleman. And his manner, as he gave a few simple orders to Antony, (who had commenced rubbing the table again) was that of one who had been accustomed to address such persons in a more natural way, than is generally thought necessary in England.

The parlour of the Lord Burleigh, unlike the public room, as it is called, of most taverns, did not contain isolated locations, in which each man looked with wary dignity and self-contained distrust at another, but was a genial place, to enter which, established for the time a sort of brotherhood with those already there. Chairs were pushed back, remarks made about the weather, a stranger's small observations were nursed, and tenderly united to the general conversation; were he a fop itself they would bear with him for the time, for the regu

lar frequenters of the place seemed to consider themselves so far in the relation of members of a domestic circle to those who came as it were to join it. All this courtesy was now shewn to the new guest, who was moreover something more than an ordinary stranger, as he was known to have taken possession of a chamber which had not been slept in since Doctor Arbuthnot's time. Not that the "elegant Arbuthnot" had decoyed thither any of the vagabond members of the invisible world, he had done no more mischief (having retired at rather a late hour) than crack a pane of glass, which had remained cracked ever since—not that the room was haunted in any way, the peculiarity of the chamber was that it was *not* haunted, either by the members of the family, or by any other visitants; for although "good beds" formed a part of the nominal attractions of the Lord Burleigh, the sleeping guest-chamber for upwards of a century had only been used by successive landladies for their

best bed-room napery, which had lain there, as smooth and unruffled, as in any other domestic repository for funded blankets, and hereditary sheets.

And here the stranger was to sleep, and of this room he had actually taken possession. Nay, a fire had been lighted in it, and a bag of melancholy shavings, the preparatory strippings of furniture, chisselled in Queen Anne's time, and converted into firewood in the reign of George the Second, had been torn from the chimney; the grate, long paralised by cold, damp, and scrofulous rust, with the sides of its venerable hobs, embossed with iron roses, and other metalic productions of the vegetable world, forming circles round Britannia, pleasantly seated among bee hives and cannon balls, ruling the waves and a small miniature ship that sailed on them;—this ancient grate, that had stood 'in cold obstruction' during many a monarch's reign, now awakened like a second sleeping beauty to the warmth of life, was

emitting furtive flames that startled the sepulchral shadows of the room; while the crackling embers were heard below, like a festival of death-watches—nay, the very barmaid, whose wont it was to sit in unruffled state, curled and blooming, behind the shining bar, was now converted into a chambermaid, and nothing loth, was bustling about the stranger's room; her twinkling feet being heard treading with a delicate touch, the carpet overheard, and ever and anon her voice in gentle earnestness calling to the landlady from the balustrade, various matters relative to the gentleman's bed; all these and other unwonted signs, sounds and understood relations of this new advent, gave the guest an interest in the eyes of the sederunt, which perhaps few other circumstances, could have done.

The stranger responded courteously, to all these civilities, without however in any way neglecting a hot beefsteak, and a silver flaggon of foaming ale, which Antony had

placed before him, while harmony of demeanour on all sides continued to increase.

"You met with an accident, sir," said Doctor Antioch, "in coming here?"

"It can hardly be reckoned a disastrous one," replied the stranger, "which has brought me to such company, and to such fare."

The guests simultaneously raised their glasses—those having pipes in their mouths removing them for that purpose, as if silently drinking to a better acquaintance with the courteous stranger.

"Your cab broke down," persisted the doctor, whom habits of controversy had made particular about preliminary admissions.

"It did," answered the stranger.

"May I ask if you feel at all bruised, or hurt in any way, sir?"

"Not in the least. Waiter, be kind enough to bring me a pint of mulled port."

"You arrived in a steam-boat the waiter told us," said Doctor Antioch.

The other nodded, and pitchforked a few pickled gerkins into his plate.

"You have come from abroad, sir, if I may guess. Excuse me, but—"

"No need in the world for excuse." replied the young man. I left Ostend this morning."

"Fine passage ?"

"I was very sea sick. All passages are alike to me that are short, and the vessel does not go down."

"I have been abroad myself," said the doctor. "Subjects are cheap on the Continent."

"The governments there would make one think so," remarked the traveller.

"You are medical I suppose ?"

"Not when I can avoid it," said the other.

"Have you heard in any foreign parts of this mysterious disappearance?" demanded the barber.

"I have heard of a good many mysterious disappearances, and mysterious appearances too," said the other carelessly.

"But of this lady, 'named Brandon,' who has put all the aristocracy in such a ferment, by violently eloping with a married monster in human shape."

"Brandon!" said the other suddenly, "what Brandon?"

"Daughter of Mr. Brandon, Member of Parliament for ——shire."

"My God, sir! what mean you?"

"Oh, ha! I thought you had not heard of it," said the barber triumphantly, "I knew that any cultivated mind would feel as I do—Antony, you may take away the gentleman's beefsteak.—Miss Katherine Brandon," continued the barber, enjoying the stranger's agitation, "daughter of Richard Brandon, M. P. and the deceased Mary his wife, daughter of the late Earl of—"

"You are jesting, sir!" said the stranger fiercely.

"Then the Times, Chronicle, and 'Tizer, are jesting—besides the Evenings," said the barber snappishly.

The stranger ran his eyes over the table, evidently in perplexity, and anxious to find a countenance which might induce a hope of being answered rationally. Mr. Burton was the person chosen. "Pray, sir," said he, now fairly losing his former nonchalant air, "is my merry acquaintance here, taking advantage of my being a stranger, to perplex me with this improbable story?"

"I am sorry," said Pontius, "as you seem to be a friend of the lady's, to be obliged to say, that there is some such story in the papers of to-day."

"It is true! d—n me, it is all true!" screamed the barber, now in his fourth tumbler. "I can answer that gentleman myself. Run

away! disappeared! with a monster in human shape. For further particulars apply to *me!*"

The young man sat as if transfixed.

"And now," resumed the barber, after a pause on all sides, "as one good turn deserves another, will you be good enough to tell me if you heard any thing in foreign parts of an extract, a vegetable extract, sir, of cucumbers, for promoting the growth of the human hair. It has also created a great sensation in the upper circles."

"Hold your tongue!" whispered Mr. Buckhurst, "if you don't want to have your head broken."

The barber was about to make an indignant reply, but the stranger at that moment addressing Mr. Burton, said, "I am a stranger in England, sir, and what I have now heard has interested me much. I am fatigued, and I fear the company here would find me but a dull companion. If you will do me the favour to

join me in my room, and partake of a bottle of mulled port with me there, I shall feel exceedingly obliged to you. I must beg your apology for such a request, but—"

"No apology, no apology in the world," said Mr. Burton rising, "I shall be happy to accompany you, and if Antony there does not bring us good wine, I will kick him to the sources of the Nile. Mulled port! I shall think I smell the banks of the Isis again."

The traveller took leave of the company, and in a few minutes was seated with Pontius in the room so lately described, before a bright fire purring merrily, with a small antique table between them, on which was a large silver flaggon of warm, spiced wine, and two drinking cups of the same metal, the three having formed chimney ornaments in the landlady's snug, back parlour, for more years than a buxom hostess cares to remember.

"Very good wine, very good indeed," said Mr. Burton, setting down his empty cup.

"It is indeed!" observed his entertainer with constrained cheerfulness. "I have spent many a merry night over worse, in lands where good wine is made."

"Well, I have spent many a merry night where good wine is drunk, but where it is neither made, nor always even paid for," said Pontius, "but it was no worse for that."

His companion bowed in a way that showed he had not been particularly attentive to the remark.

"And now," resumed Mr. Burton, "that babbling barber below stairs has told you something that you did not know before, and which seems to have interested you. Are you any way connected with this lady? There now! my hand, you see, is steadier than yours was, although I am not remarkable for a steady hand. I had an illness, or a fall, or something of that sort when I was a boy."

"It is really true then," said the young

man, speaking with some difficulty, "that Katherine Brandon has—has—"

"Proved herself Eve's daughter, sir; and yet as Doctor Antioch says—the bald headed gentleman you saw below stairs—it is hardly a thing to fret about. The best trees have worthless branches, and it matters little by what wood-craft they are lopped. Her father it seems is of this way of thinking, for it is said, he has renounced her, and I verily believe if she were to return again to his house, he would order her to be turned on the streets. And poor girl, if all this be true, she would soon learn there, that the bitterness of infamy is worse than the bitterness of death."

The traveller did not speak.

"Ay, the London streets," continued Mr. Burton, resting his heels on the carpet, and playing with his wine cup, "what lessons of life are taught there! A man who has wandered one livelong night on them, has seen

more to make him sick of this life than the devil preaches in support of suicide. Had Diogenes passed a few such nights as I have done on the sodden cushions of a frozen hackney coach, he would have learned more than ever he discovered in his tub. They say misery gives a man strange bedfellows, I have also found that it creates a difficulty in finding beds."

A glance at the stranger's countenance made Mr. Burton pause. A rigidity, a pinched, corpse-like collapse of feature had been gradually stealing over the face, which the calm tones of his voice had concealed, his eyes looked so bright and excited, that one would have almost wished to shade them from the light, his very hands looked pale and bloodless, and the trembling of his blanched lips, with the wavering agony of expression that shot at instants across his countenance, made Burton demand in a startled manner if he were ill.

"I am well," answered the stranger with his

former calmness of voice. "You said but now that my hand shook, see," continued he, pouring the wine into their cups, "it is as steady as yours can be." He took up his cup and drank it off hastily.

Mr. Burton was troubled, yet he followed his entertainer's example.

"You appear to suffer much," said he, putting down his cup, "from what you have heard to-night."

"Fatigue and want of sleep have weakened me," said the other. "And who," he demanded in the same tone of voice, although his eyes had still that dry, clear brightness which shews intensity of excitement, "who is said to be this lady's paramour?"

"That is not mentioned—but whoever he is, he must have had the devil's aid, to have blinded so beautiful a woman—I have seen her at the opera—to such an act of reckless infamy. You knew the lady?"

"I did," answered the other, speaking as if the words almost choked him.

"May I ask if she is related to you in any way. Nay, I would not intrude on your confidence, and have little curiosity on the subject, beyond what concerns yourself in relation to the evident pain you feel at the matter."

"She is in no way related to me," answered the other.

"You must pardon me, sir, but your evident agitation is in bad keeping with measured terms. I do not ask you to tell me anything which your prudence might induce you to conceal, and I hope you will forgive the interest I take in one who I see so afflicted in my company, when I ask you what it is which has so strangely affected you. You say you knew the lady?"

"I loved her!" exclaimed the stranger, in a tone of excited feeling which broke down all reserve. "I loved her, worshipped her. The very ground she walked on, was hallowed

to me. I have ridden miles on a summer evening to look on the woods that surrounded the house in which she slept—or if I caught a glimpse of her as she walked in that noble old park, the day was a bright one in my memory. She exceeded the fairest picture that youth can draw of the woman who is to be the reward of his proudest hopes attained. I tell you she was pure-minded, noble-hearted, and good—the diadem of an empire would have been no price, no worthy price for such a heart as hers. A very woman! rich in the sweet instincts of her kind, a good, gentle, lovely being, fitted for a world where woman has only to listen and believe—where the suspicion of wrong is unneeded, and the caution of jealous dignity puts no bridle on the heart—a creature to nestle in a husband's bosom, and warm his love with the pure flame of self-forgetting devotion—there is not such a woman in the world—and now! what is she now, if there is a semblance of truth in this cursed tale!—a

ruined thing, a toy, a foot ball for listless sensuality—But it is false! before God and man the story is a lie!"

"If your attachment to the lady does not blind your judgment," said Mr. Burton, "such a woman can have been no willing victim. There must have been some cruel fraud practised on her—and on such a being, sacrilege is honest to it."

"It is sacrilege indeed," said the other—"the rifling of God's own altar, to have torn purity from such a heart. With no ordinary man, the confidence, the clinging devotion, the passionate tenderness of such a woman, would have been ineffectual to disarm an intention so vile. But man or devil, I will rescue her! if it be not too late to merit the name of rescue."

"That will be no easy matter. Her father at first did, I understand, everything that could be—"

"Her father!" exclaimed the other passion-

ately, " a proud, cold-hearted old man. His regrets are for himself—the miserable gratification of receiving a certain degree of homage, on account of the old English race from which he is sprung—the fondly cherished thought so dear to self-love—the poor, sickly plant that would wither under the open light of self-examination—the wretched mushroom excrescence of his mind, nourished by port wine, and easy chairs, by peasants' raised hats, and the tablets in a village church, that he," continued the speaker with increasing bitterness, " that he too must necessarily possess the chivalrous intrepidity, the dauntless nobleness of some men whose bones have long been rotten to dust—the loss of this sweet thought, or worse than that, the idea that others may now look upon him with a tittle of less reverence from such an outrage, to the idea of hereditary infallibility, from which alone, or at least particularly, he felt he was a distinguished person; it is in such relations as these, that he regards the matter,

and by such his efforts will be measured. But I" continued the stranger, with an energy that gave his features a new expression, "I will search for her, and if on the earth I shall find her—and if she should be polluted, as far as the conventional morality of life can pronounce her —I will at least rescue her name from the ribbald scoff of those who would judge of her character, by the result of accomplished hypocrisy, united with woman's confiding in our sex's love. For I tell you again, that lady is as pure of heart, as noble minded, as free from the easy thoughts of a guilty state, as ever woman was. And he who has done this, him too I shall find, and if God wither not this arm, he shall know that Katherine Brandon is not defenceless, though her father has renounced her as his child."

"You have said that you loved the lady."

"As man loves but once," exclaimed the other, now excited beyond controul, "a love that fills the whole heart, and reason pays no

tribute to—as the soul worships—as passion itself is holy—as every estimate of worth is embodied and deified as—self is forgotten, except in the healthy wish of being worthy to love, and as hope in its dizziest dreams can go no higher than to be worthy to have such love returned. I have told you that the ground she walked on, the house in which she slept, were sacred to me—sacred to me as ever shrine was to pilgrim—all that is beautiful, all that sheds gentle peace on the souls struggling with the world—all that gives happiness in this weary journey to the grave; all that can cheat the poor heart with sensations of bliss, with a foretaste of the good man's heaven, were hers alone to give to me. And now, even now, polluted as she may be, scorned, scoffed, and her name made merry with, even now I will search for her through the world!"

"This is madness," said Burton hastily.

"I do not ask its name," said the other, with a haughtiness of self-will that he had

not before shewn. "I will rescue her, or die for it!"

"May I ask if she returned your love—if she was betrothed to you?" enquired Mr. Burton.

"It was love without intercourse, but no less love for that. And she—she saw, she knew that I loved her, and I once thought the knowledge was not displeasing to her. I had known her from infancy, and yet all communion, except by accident, was debarred between us."

"And why?"

"Because a brand was set upon my forehead—because born and educated as a gentleman, with wealth, fair talents, and an unblemished name, I was of a prescribed race—my father had made his fortune by trade, and had thus given me Cain's inheritance. He retired from business while yet in middle life, purchased an estate of a country gentleman who had died

bankrupt, and soon after married his orphan daughter. That lady was my mother, and when I was but ten years old, she died. Mr. Brandon was a distant neighbour—and so it was that I knew his daughter, who was a few years younger than myself. I was not much at home, and in other scenes and other society learned to forget or despise the petty distinctions which set things ajar at home. At length I returned. I had finished my education with credit, taken honours at Cambridge, but did not study for any profession, my father's ambition being to make me a country gentleman, and I was content with anything that kept me near to Brandon Hall. An accident, however, foiled the good man's modest hopes. It happened that at a county meeting, he was grossly insulted he lost his temper—and mark me," continued the young man speaking with suppressed passion, "he was struck, and kicked! The old man had English feelings, and would

never have stood tamely by and seen another treated so—he felt the insult keenly, and I then, for the first time, felt the full force of the small conventional tyranny I had despised. Yet I felt it, but to rise against it. I sought out the person who had struck my father—I pulled him from his horse, and cudgelled him till he moaned at my feet like a beaten dog—I had my heel on his throat, but I spurned him from me—he knew me well, but he sought no open redress, his bruises were said to have been occasioned by a fall from his horse—and so the matter dropped. Even I soon forgot it, for Katherine Brandon alone occupied my thoughts. We seldom met now, but in public places, for the person I had chastised was an influential supporter and personal friend of her father's, and the slight intercourse between our families ceased. Soon after this my father died—I was disgusted with the life he had chosen for me—I burned to distinguish myself—I sold the

estate, and at the age of two and twenty, found myself possessed of about forty thousand pounds."

"A very pleasant sum," said Mr. Burton. "And what did you do then? if I may enquire so far."

"There was war in Spain. I joined it with ardour, and after the loss of health and wealth I was compelled to renounce it. A twelve-month's residence in other parts of the south of Europe has restored me to strength again, and after three years of my life miserably wasted, and three parts of my fortune gone, I have returned to England to hear the news I have done to-night. But if I rescue Katherine Brandon, if I rescue her stainless and pure, life may yet have hope and happiness for me.'

Mr. Burton shook his head.

"Will you assist me?" demanded the young man. "I am a stranger in London, and

know not the best way to set about enquiries. I have still about ten thousand pounds, and I would willingly expend the last shilling of it in such a cause as this. I must know the truth as far as it is already known, before I set out on what something tells me, will not be a fruitless search."

"Truth is as hard to extract from its professors the press, as true religion is from professors of another sort," remarked Mr. Burton; "and although I do not, I cannot in fact see any reasonable hope of success in what you propose, I shall not requite your confidence churlishly; and I will tell you that there *is* a quarter in which it is said considerable intelligence might be gained. The caterers for the press find out everything, and they have managed to find out this; but hitherto it has I understand served them but little, as the lady has obstinately refused to communicate anything she may know. It is a clergyman's

widow, of the name of Wrey, who is now reduced—you will hardly believe it—to the poor employment of selling newspapers, and her daughter's fancy work, drawings and such small matters in a little shop, situated Heaven knows where; for my informant having failed himself in getting the information he wished, would not divulge the residence, lest it should reach the ears of any other literary poacher on the preserves of society, who might be more fortunate. This person, I understand, knows more than the public does, and could we find her, we might learn something of what you require.

The stranger had changed countenance at the name, but this, Mr. Burton, who was engaged in filling their cups with the last of the wine, had not observed.

"The person you have mentioned," said he, "is not unknown to me. She is the widow of the rector of the parish in which I was born.

I had heard indeed that her husband's death had made her and her daughter penniless, but I never could have imagined such a change as this. But it may be she has rejected the assistance of her friends."

"It is much more likely that they never offered it," observed the other, looking into his empty cup.

"Could we find her she would tell me all she knows—I know she would. Her daughter was Katherine Brandon's friend. How the world, or what is the world to us, changes in a few years! When I left England the lady of whom you speak was the wife of a man as much respected in his neighbourhood as proud Squire Brandon, with all his sires. And her daughter too, a sweet girl, educated in the lap of comparative luxury, is she reduced to such a life as that?"

"It is so, and such changes are but common things. The girl has no better lot; and since you reckon so securely on her disposition to assist you, I think I can take you to-morrow

evening, to a place where you may meet her."

"Where is that?" demanded the other.

"You would be no wiser if you knew it's name. It is a sad place to visit in quest of such a girl—but that is another theme. You look as if you wanted rest. To-morrow I shall be with you again. My name is Pontius Burton, late of Christ Church, Oxford. You look surprised, but the fact is so, which you know is apt to want the probability of fiction. I was educated as the heir of an uncle who was between me in the line of entail to an estate of fair rental, but he married when he was sixty, and has now a fine family of seven children—four of them boys. So there was an end of that."

"And my name is Walter Osborne, late of Trinity, Cambridge. So now I presume we may be supposed to have made the acquaintance of each other."

"And I could have wished the occasion had

been different," said Pontius—"but now you look unhappy again. Let me recommend you to go to bed; you have a task before you, to say the best of it, that will require the quick wit of a cool head. To-morrow I shall be with you early."

CHAPTER III.

Of the newspaper exchange, and how Walter Osborne discovered an early acquaintance, and formed a hasty resolution.

THE wintry twilight was falling cheerlessly over London streets. The cold damp atmosphere was felt, in spite of the smoky, steamy clouds, that mingling into a murky firmament, hung between men's eyes, and the arch of heaven; the lamps flickered palely amid the dull grey light, and the blackened houses looked melancholy and forlorn, in spite of the noises

around them. The aspect of nature and of life was desolate. The rich city man buttoned up in his great coat, hurried westward to his warm mansion in some foggy square—the poor struggler for daily bread, whose day of toil was not yet over, also hurried on, feeling his heart sink, and his humble hopes sicken, at the absence of an object that might cheer him on his way—abject poverty too shuffled by, with its greasy morsel of human food clenched in its meagre hand; and amid them all, the splashing chariot with its liveried satellites and smoothly prancing team, dashed insultingly along; spurning, in its rapid glide, the spungy streets, and trudging passengers through which it drove. The gin shop bar was crowded, and the burnished shop window glittered in the bright rays of its newly lighted jet; the postman's bell rang loudly, and the street cries rose hoarse and desperate. The city churchyard crammed with corruption, the narrow disposal of which had been matter of enterprise and gain, seemed

to swell in the dim air that hung over it, while the marshalled lamps shed their stray beams on the place of graves, making the gloom of approaching darkness, most melancholy there.

The clangour of busy sounds rose higher, as the darkness increased, and the lamps grew brighter in the gloom. The clangour of busy sounds; of that fearful struggle in which, like famished dogs, men, the inheritors of this beautiful world, scramble for a poorer pittance than nature grants to the insect they tread on; the assured means of living for themselves and their little ones—the hoarse despairing laugh of infamy, the shrieking cry of rivalry, stimulated by a future; in which death is shadowed out gibbering over the poor suicide's grave—the contest for life, for breathing existence; for phrenzied pleasure like to that of drunkards in a sinking ship; for the gratification of one appetite maddened in its craving; for the means of conferring some lonely comfort which the racked heart yearns to bestow—the clangour of

busy sounds! of avarice in its patched coat and nestled gains; of vanity ruffling in its studied garb; of envy with its hollow laugh rising like a bubble on the stream of anxious sounds; of penury too, with an unheeded wail even in its shuffling steps; and of wo, gliding like a ghost along, with a wan sound to which the eye ministered bitterly. And there they roared and swelled; far, far, on all sides as the patient ear could reach, broken on each other into a vast dull hum; making the hopeful doubt, the strong man fear, and the heart of the benevolent selfish.

The impressions produced by these were very different in the minds of Mr. Pontius Burton and his acquaintance of the preceding evening, as they now passed together into Catherine Street in the Strand.

It was the hour of the newspaper exchange, and here were congregated newsmen from all parts of London, near and far remote, either personally, or by their noisy representatives,

with their journals wrapped in black leather under their arms, shouting, scrambling, and jostling each other aside. "Times of yesterday! Times of yesterday!" "Herald! Herald! Herald! who wants the Morning Herald?" "Chronicle! Chronicle!" "Post of to-day! who wants the Post? who wants the Morning Post?" "Advertiser!" "Post!" "Times!" "Herald!" "Times! Times! Times!" twenty voices shouted at once: newsmen's boys glad of an opportunity of being noisy in a legitimate way, screaming at the tops of their voices; poor men who by the sale of newspapers, had to keep their families from starving, moving anxiously about—here and there a miserable looking old woman, dressed in faded black, standing with a helpless look at the outskirts of the crowd, holding her unsold newspaper in her trembling hand, (poor old soul! perhaps she had trudged miles through the wet streets, to obtain a chance of exchanging her forlorn purchase, for one which she has the feeble chance of selling

in her scanty neighbourhood) and worse than all that, one or two scantily dressed, pale faced girls, with something like shame on their famine-worn countenances, at the savage medly of tumult, amid which they were compelled to stand.

There was one girl slightly removed from the crowd. She was dressed plainly, yet there was a decorous neatness in her simple guise—there was no expression of shrinking shame on her calm sweet features, but an unrebuking melancholy that told more keenly the nature of her suffering. She appeared to be about nineteen or twenty years of age, her face was distinguished by no striking marks of beauty, but its look was gentle, the full lips had that nameless character in their expression, that quiet purity which might have smiled in paradise—that look which the parent's heart cleaves to, and the wordling lover distrusts while he worships. Her other features were all in harmony with this—the brow was cold and fair beneath

the plainly parted tresses, the face was pale, but clear and delicate, and the dark grey eyes looked as though they had often wept. Her figure was exquisitely moulded, graceful even there; and her quiet mien, as she exchanged the folded journals from her little wallet, with the rude competitors around her, won them for the moment into something like sympathising politeness, yet deferential withal. And there she stood, like a meek one suffering unrepiningly — encountering rude stares, imitative works from unfledged little ruffians, as well as, now and then, covert overtures to infamy, from well dressed young men, whom her appearance had attracted from the pavement.

Mr. Pontius Burton saw her first, and he guessed she was the person of whom they were in quest; yet a strange mixture of feeling prevented him for a moment or too from pointing her out. His companion looked on the noisy group before him almost unconsciously, for after a hasty and profitless glance, the chance

of finding Lucy Wrey there, seemed to him too remote, for hope to give it interest. He was thinking again of Katherine Brandon, of her whom his enthusiastic love had long made the familiar hope of his heart—of her sweet and to him hallowed presence, as she had driven past him to church on many a sabbath summer day—he seemed again to hear the flickering sounds of the tall hedge trees' glancing leaves, to see her once more pass through the cool aisle of the grey old church, and her white dress fall, as she knelt in humble prayer over the worn pavement stone, that lay above the bold Brandon's of the ancient time—the noises around him jangled on his ears, but they created no distinct impression on his mind—the swarming group was before his eyes, but its individual objects were as unregarded by him, as the sea waves are by the desolate voyager, as they move around the ship that carries him from all he loves.

A minute or two elapsed, and Burton began

to doubt if he had guessed rightly, when a casual glance of the girl's towards his companion, evidently startled her; a blush rose to her forehead, and for a moment she seemed irresolute—It was, however, but for a moment. Hurriedly wrapping up her little bundle, she left the crowd, and Burton had only time to point her out to his companion, ere she disappeared. The young man darted forward, and almost as soon as his eyes caught her retreating figure, his hand was gently laid on her shoulder—

"Lucy," said he, "do you turn away from me?"

The girl shrank from the touch, looked unsteadily to his face for a moment, then turned away her head, and covered her eyes with her hand.

"Let me call a cab or a coach," whispered Mr. Burton hurriedly—and hardly waiting for an answer he started off, and in a few moments returned from the neighbouring coach stand, seated on the dickey of a carriage, beside a

a short snubby man, bending forward and industriously flogging a cramp knee-ed horse. The young man gave the name of a street near the Holloway Road, handed in the still agitated girl, the door was shut with an asthmatic sound, smack went the whip, and round went the wheels, twice in the wrong direction, jerking Mr. Burton almost out of his seat as they struck the edge of the pavement; at last the vehicle went on, and the driver, with the air of a man who had done something smart, hitched himself straight in his seat, and threw his great coat tails over his knees.

"A raw night, sir," said he, addressing Mr. Burton. "Go along, you old tory!" he continued in the same breath, addressing his horse. "Do you see that fellow there, going into Drury Lane, sir? That man was tried last year at the Bailey for robbing a house, and I dare say he is plotting something now. Go along Billy! Macready plays to-night at the Garden, and there's to be a new Hoppery

at the Lane. Cut along old horse! There's to be a frantic debate to-morrow in the 'ouse of Commons—a regular free and easy. I hear talk of putting down the 'busses—but *that* aint true. Pitch it into the wood pavement! old Herod the Tetrarch, (whack, whack, whack!) That's a regular old established 'orse, that is, and has been a pretty considerable time in this wale of tears; you see he knows the short cuts as well as a christian, and takes as much care of himself as if he had a wife and family. Push along! (whack, whack!) do you think I stole you? No! (whack, whack, whack!) I should have stolen a livelier 'orse—yet the old tulip has paces when he likes to put them out—but he thinks within himself. He once run down a widdy woman, that horse did. Bowl away old chap—never say skin me! That 'ere little boy has plenty of brothers and sisters, or he never would have run under the 'orse's head that way. My little boy this mornin' says to me—he is only rising seven—

'Father,' says he, 'I wants a pair of top boots;' now" (bending sideways towards Mr. Burton, and striking the horse's flank,) "that's what I call the march of intellect. Well," (sitting erect again,) "this is a regular slimy night; and we are to have a storm, I can see that. I have to take a gentleman down to the Harryadne, a Scotch steamer, at nine o'clock; she was to have sailed in the mornin', but she hurt her windpipe somehow. I wish him joy of his voyage—any how I shall have had two fares out of it. Trip away my daisy! (whack, whack, whack!) My eye! aint the wind getting up?—there will be a heavy crop of chimney tops this blessed night, and my gentleman as goes by the Harryadne, wont he be able to write a spicy letter to his Missus, if ever he gets safe to Leith? There's no kind of death that goes more agin my grain, than that 'ere drownin—Lord, Lord! its a nasty thing, to be smothered with cold water!"

The cabman made occasional pauses to en-

duce Mr. Burton to take part in these remarks, of which however that gentleman did not avail himself, until they reached a small shop in the street directed, at which the inside passengers having enterred, Pontius and the cabman adjourned to a neighbouring public house, where for the present they must be left together.

Soon after entering the cab, Lucy regained her composure, although she still seemed to feel painfully the associations which the stranger's unexpected appearance had called up in her mind. He witnessed this, and it prevented him for the time from speaking of what he was so anxious to inquire regarding. The noise of the cab wheels further prevented much conversation, and it was with no small satisfaction that he saw the carriage stop at the direction Lucy had enabled him to give. On entering the place however, the meagerly furnished little shop, dimly lighted; the slight wares, the poor work of a toiling girl; the rude sounds

without, and the general aspect of the objects around him, brought to his mind with vivid and painful feeling, the changed condition of its inmates, and the nature of that struggle in which two such helpless beings were now engaged.

The surprise of Mrs. Wrey nearly equalled what her daughter's had been. "Walter Osborne!" she exclaimed, as if doubting who stood before her.

"The same, the same!" answered the young man taking her hand. "Three years it now is since we parted last!"

Tears rose to the widow's eyes; she led him into the little room behind the shop; Lucy seated herself beside a small table, and resumed her needle work, keeping her face out of view, and bending over the embroidery with the patient muteness of lonely toil. She evidently desired to remain unnoticed and unaddressed.

The young man listened first with interest, and at last with patience, to the widow's recital of her sufferings and her wrongs, mingled

with a few covert reproaches against her late husband, who—always a thoughtless man, except in regard to his garden—had neglected to pay the last premium on the policy of his life insurance, putting off the matter by making up his mind to pay the fine with the new premium on the following year—but before that year arrived, the good man died suddenly one Sunday morning, with his sermon in his pocket, tied up with a whip lash. How his friends, who ought to have taken her part, never attempted to arrest the progress of the law, which was oppression to her—how nobody effectually endeavoured to make the insurance company pay the five thousand pounds, which, if the county gentlemen had taken the matter up, would certainly have been done—how the gardener and other servants became inattentive, the moment they became convinced they were to receive no wages—and how the attorney for the creditors had insisted on the sale of every thing, down to her poor dear dead husband's watch,

and had bought in all the wine for a mere nothing, which however was very little consequence, as he had paid nobody. How she had come to London, and had fruitlessly endeavoured to be put upon the pension list—how she had parted with all her own jewels for small temporary loans, and had been unable to redeem them, and so there was loss upon loss—how ill she had been, for eleven weeks confined to bed, and how Lucy had watched and cared for her, and the tears the poor girl shed, when the doctor recommended his patient's removal to an hospital; and how unknown to her, she had sat up for nights and nights, labouring at needlework, with which a kind hearted woman in their neighbourhood—when she found that the girl would work for half the price of anybody else—had been so obliging as to furnish her. How she missed the little comforts to which she had been so long accustomed; Lucy too, although she

never complained, must also miss them, but then she was young.

Yes, Lucy was young, and for her years she had known the cares which manhood, with its best sympathies twining round, and cherished by its sweet household gods, endeared by the memories of early joys, and love nurtured to bliss, by the realisation of all that is left to us of God's own paradise in this doomed world—the gentle communion of the loved and trusted, and the endearing helplessness of those, who in nature's innocence love us with their whole, pure hearts—cares which stout manhood so fortified sinks under, and flies to despairing vice to seek refuge from.—Lucy had known them all, and toiled and stinted herself of nature's claims, in ministering to the peevish misery of her who knew not what her child's sufferings were. True, her humble bed was prepared for her at the late hour at which she laid her dizzy head on its pillow —true, the slight meal somehow was pro-

vided, and with the energy of the forlorn, squalid misery was kept from their door—but how? By the sacrifice of all that youth loves, by anxious thoughts, usurping the place of those genial of her sympathies, and natural to her age—loading the young mind with the sad cares of the scramble for existence, crushing its elasticity, and withering the delicate joyousness of its tender bloom. Lucy had no holidays, no pleasures, but the pittance earned by the unrepining labour of late and early hours; no amusements to relieve the tedium of toil; no companions of her own age; no love: day followed day in the same privation, the same toil, and if her mind was for a moment relieved from the pressing fear that to-morrow might be even worse than to-day, and looked round for some cheering prospect, however faint; it was but the pause allotted to the wretched, in which they feel that it is more depressing to look on the shoreless tedium of the future, than to struggle with the evils

which are near. And the body suffered, as the mind imprisoned in its own endurance, almost ceased to repine at wasting youth, and instincts ungratified. The cheek was pale, or if flushed at times, it was not bloom; the eye naturally soft and still so, had that painful feeling in its expression, which shows the absence of healthy dalliance with the trifles of life; the little hands which nature had formed so faultlessly, that they became a feature in themselves, wanted the reposing beauty which painters copy; and the whole figure although still preserving its soft delicacy of proportions, had lost much of its grace, in the aspect which toil had stamped upon it.

When Walter Osborne mentioned the name of Katherine Brandon, Lucy started from the position she had hitherto occupied, and turned full round on him, with a look of excited interest on her open countenance, which formed a marked contrast to the quiet manner in which her mother heard and answered him.

The object of his visit was readily gained. All that Mrs. Wrey knew of the matter which so agitated and engrossed the feelings of her guest, was this. Lucy had one day lately been stopped in the street by a footman, sent to her from a carriage, which had been suddenly arrested as she passed it, and Katherine Brandon alighting, had, in spite of Lucy's reluctance, made her enter it, where she met a lady unknown to her, but whom afterwards she found was Lady Felton, and they had driven to that lady's house together. That there, on being alone with her former friend, Katherine had (after making many enquiries regarding Lucy, which the latter rather evaded than answered) casually told her, that she was on the very day following to leave her home for the north of Scotland, being now convinced that her father would never give his consent to her union with any one but a certain duke, whose addresses, which were ever odious to her, he had from at first merely supporting, ended by

subjecting her to, in a manner which amounted to persecution, which she determined not to endure.

The name of the proposed companion of her flight she had not mentioned, but merely said, that she should leave Lady Felton's house on the following day, with an intimate friend of her ladyship's. And that since then, both her daughter and herself had heard with surprise and sorrow, that Miss Brandon had been the victim of a foul conspiracy on the part of her unknown lover, and they feared also on the part of Lady Felton, who, by the way, Katherine had informed Lucy, she was but slightly acquainted with! and whom they now understood was a lady who had a whispered reputation for gallantry and intrigue. While amidst all this, they had more than once been importuned by parties, with whom they were unacquainted, to give even this slight information on the subject—and which was all they knew. They understood that these were

persons connected with the public journals; and that a servant of Lady Felton's had acquainted them with Lucy's residence, who, after parting from Miss Brandon, had suffered herself to be driven home in her ladyship's carriage.

All this was extracted peice-meal from the widow, and after that, she launched again into the dreary sea of her own sorrows, expressing firm conviction that all mankind, and particularly the attorneys, were in league against her rights; and that she only required some gentleman to take her part, to be restored to competence, if not indeed to the vicarage itself, properly aired and genteely furnished. This, Walter listened too for some time, with the unsteady courtesy of difficult patience, and at last took leave, promising that on his return from Scotland—for which place he should start that very night, he would do every thing in his power to obtain her redress for the indistinct wrongs of which she complained.

He found the cab waiting at the door, and a little boy who had been left in charge of it, amusing himself in annoying the horse, by putting marbles in its nose, and laying bets with another urchin, as to the distance which the animal could blow them out—who quickly pocketting his instruments of torture, assiduously pointed out the public-house to which Burton and the cabman had retired. Here he found them in a naked walled room, in company with about a dozen persons engaged in singing, and drinking hot gin-and-water—it being a meeting that night, (as the landlord informed him), of the Sons of 'Armony. Pontius was sitting quietly over his tumbler, but the cabman was gesticulating violently like some of the others, and joining in the virtuous chorus—

> "Go away from the window, my love, and my dove,
> Go away from the window my dear!"

Resisting some entreaties of the Sons of Harmony to remain, he compelled the cabman and Pontius to finish their grog in a hurried

choking manner, and to come back to the carriage; and telling the former, who was now engaged in a sharp altercation with his *locum tenens*, about having done something to his horse, to drive with all speed to the Lord Burleigh; he took his seat beside Mr. Burton, and in a minute or two they were threading again the intricacies of unknown streets.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the manner in which Walter Osborne set out for Scotland, and the consequences attending it to others as well as to himself.

On rattled the cab, with a noise which for some time prevented any conversation between Walter and his companion; a state of things which the former seemed to care little to change. At length, when the sounds of "merry Islington" were left behind, Mr. Burton remarked, "A pretty girl that, sir, you saw to-night."

"Yes," said the other, "poor girl, she is very beautiful."

"A glorious woman, sir," rejoined the other, "a quiet, sweet, patient countenance. Had Eve been such an one it would have been a bad thing for attorneys.—And by the way it is somewhat unjust to the sex to confound them all with that frail horticulturist.--What a distance she must have to walk to that exchange of courtesies, in Catherine Street.—And what, if I may be so bold as to ask, what has she told you of the fair runaway?"

"Little beyond this, that she has gone to Scotland. I shall start for Scotland this very night. If any steam-boat sails I think I should go by it—I believe that is the speediest way, is it not?"

"Upon my word I cannot tell you. I should as soon think of enquiring the shortest way to Siberia as to Scotland. I never could abide whiskey. But as to a steam-boat—that rascally cabman informs me there is one sails for Leith at nine o'clock."

"Then I shall go by it—but it is more than

two hours till then—we shall have a quiet bottle of that old port again together, before I start," said Walter cheerfully.

"With all my heart. Talk of roses and all that sort of thing, what would the green earth be without black strap for the fortunate, and public houses for such as I? Yet every man who has any soul—although indeed they say every body, even Antony yonder, has a soul—has something of floral poetry in his nature, and I give you my credit—a very poor thing by the bye to offer to any man—that when I saw that sweet girl standing in Catherine Street to-night, she seemed to me to realize the words of a forgotten poet,

> 'And so the rose looks lovely still,
> Though sad and fainting when
> It's pluck'd the marble vase to fill,
> And bloom on broken stem.'

You remember, even Falstaff on his deathbed 'played with flowers, and babbled o' green fields,' and Antony now, I have no doubt that

even Antony, has occasionally a strange feeling when he happens to see a fresh flower in Fleet Street."

Walter who was occupied with his own thoughts, was paying no attention to his companion—Mr. Burton knew this, yet he continued—

"Antony has many good qualities, but none that can just be called a passion for flowers; and yet had he seen that girl to-night, he would have discovered no impropriety in likening her to a rose—although perhaps a mulberry tree, or a royal oak would have pleased him better."

"What is this steamer's name?" demanded Walter when the cab went over smoother ground.

"The Ariadne. You will have a bad night though, for the wind blows high already. But heaven and earth! my friend, this is a will-o'-the-wisp chase you are bent on. And to Scotland too! of all places in the world, that

country is my abhorrence.—But here we are again in Fleet Street, where every body progresses slowly."

Rejecting Mr. Burton's request to join his friends in the parlour, Walter proceeded to own room; and the silver flaggon, with the two shining cups were again speedily set before them.

"Well, I am heartily glad," remarked the former, "that our pilgrimage is over—I wish sincerely you would defer your departure till to-morrow. There are steam-boats and railways, and all that sort of thing ready every day, and why set out in the darkness of night, to that accursed region of mists, flints, and utilitarians. You will have a storm too, no joke they say, in those northern latitudes."

Walter only replied by filling their cups. "Now, Master Antony," said he, "will you have the kindness to pack that trunk?"

Antony looked surprised, not to say startled, at the request, and began to take up brushes,

dust them with his towel, and put them into the trunk as if they had been ale glasses.

"They won't break," said Pontius.

Much comforted by this, Antony stripped the table with the rapidity of a person accustomed to collect pewter pots, threw in the half empty dressing case after the medley of its contents, locked and strapped the trunk, dusted it with his towel, pursed out his lips, and left the room.

"You will do something to relieve the distresses of that poor girl you saw to-night," said Mr. Burton, falling back in his chair.

"I will do what I may, when I return from Scotland."

"That may be too late," remarked the other.

"It can hardly be so. Besides, it will be a difficult task to confer benefits there, in a way to ensure their being received, and in truth my mind is now occupied with a calamity even more pressing than hers."

"But not one which you are likely to be so able to remove. Well, well, I am no Mentor, and if I were, I see it would avail little with you. All I can do is to drink to your success, and that I do heartily."

"A message from the office, Mr. Burton," said Antony presenting his face at the door. "You are wanted to relieve a reporter at the House of Lords."

"Directly, directly—call a cab, Antony—" Antony vanished, and Pontius filled up the wine cups again.

"The cab is at the bottom of the lane, sir," said Antony, appearing again in a few minutes, "and there is another message from the office, to ask if you are gone."

"Very well, very well, tell the cabman to wait five minutes.—I would give five pounds that I had not to go to the House of Lords to-night. But let us be merry for the short time left to us. No use looking on the hard—the Scotch side of things, as Doctor Antioch did

of this same House of Lords, when I smuggled him into the reporter's gallery, to see the king and half the peers of England; an imposing scene it was, but all the interest the doctor felt in it was, in speculating on the probable number of diseased livers in the body of the house. But come! let us be merry I say again—a cheerful fire, pleasant wine, and a companion—that will improve. Cheer up, my friend, don't look so much out of sorts, it is only a petticoat matter after all—keep up your spirits. Once in the flight of ages past, there lived d—n me—a man!"

"You're wanted at the House of Lords, Mr. Burton," said Antony, appearing again.

"I am going, man, I am going," said Pontius evasively—"tell the porter I *am* gone. And now go away yourself, and speak the speech as I have pronounced it, trippingly on the tongue—this is really excellent wine," continued Mr. Burton, when Antony was gone, "it must have been snugged away in the

cellars here, since the days of the periwigs. Well God bless everybody! I drink their healths."

Walter said nothing—indeed he was scarcely attending to his companion—he looked at his watch, and saw it was nearly time to start. By-and-bye Antony, who knew Mr. Burton's habits of procrastination, appeared once more, and told him laconically as before, that he was wanted at the House of Lords.

"D—n the House of Lords!" said Pontius passionately. "The house is up, or will be up now before I could reach it. We shall take the cab to carry us to the steam-boat," continued he, addressing Walter; "I will see you safe on board, and on my return I can easily get a printed slip from some other paper, and write out my part of the matter as wisely as if I had been there. Nay, never attempt to oppose it, I am determined to see you to the ship."

The young man allowed him to have it his

own way, paid his tavern bill, had his trunks carried to the cab, and in a quarter of an hour found himself in a gloomy shed, that formed a badly lighted passage to the wharf pier.

They entered the vessel—Her long, dark deck was animated by dim figures moving about among the piled goods and passengers' luggage, the black river shone beyond in the cold smoothness which the lamps of London Bridge revealed; the cabin deck lights shone out on the darkness, a lantern glimmered here and there on the deck, one or two passengers stood pensively by, watching the proceedings, as invalids watch the progress of mixing medicines which they have consented to take; and sailors and porters bustled about, aggravating the dismal aspect of things, by wrangling about small matters, and being callously rude to everybody. Descending to the cabin, it was also well filled, but silent; old travellers were taking off their upper cravats, and wind-

ing up their watches—others were sitting alone, looking like patients in a great surgeon's parlour, waiting their turn to undergo an operation which they had made up their minds to endure decently—ladies were sitting holding reticules and small baskets, with aspects as mutely melancholy as those of poultry about to have their necks drawn—friends were talking to each other in death-bed whispers, and solitary persons were contemplating with a kind of pensive apathy, those who were to be their companions in drowning, or arriving at Leith—One or two young men were attempting to be cheerful, looking down sideways on their well fitting travelling dresses, and bringing their eyes into flirting communion with an occasional pretty pale-faced girl—who now however responded to such overtures with a self-containd langour, which was painful to behold —prosy middle aged gentlemen with artificial teeth, sat round the stove, and spoke about indifferent matters, as all matters but the present

then really were; while the Dead Sea appearance of things, was wretchedly enlivened by an occasional whimpering cry from children in the ladies' cabin. The place indeed might have been taken for Charon's waiting-room, filled with male and female ghosts, waiting for their turn across the Styx, had it not been for one or two gentlemen who were drinking whiskey and water.

Some of these were acquaintances just made on deck, and who had agreed in thinking it was very cold there; others were friends of old standing, speaking over their tumblers with an earnest gravity of expression, calculated to make a looker on imagine, that if either of the gentlemen fell into a ditch, the other would ask him if he was hurt, and even stand by to countenance him, while he helped himself out of it—others sat alone in their travelling caps; some with a sulky stage coach look, reading the evening papers; and only deigning to look about when, they raised their tumblers from time to

time; and others of these, two or three plainly dressed, unpretending looking sort of persons —who were afterwards discovered to be men of rank—were keeping themselves to themselves, in a way that was courteous to every body. Such tables as were not thus occupied, had beds prepared on them, giving the cabin something of an hospital look; which was further sustained by the languid atmosphere of the place, and the stewards moving about without their coats, looking as if they had a foretaste already of the ministrations which it would soon be their Samaritan duty to afford.

"I say, this is a cheerful looking place," said Pontius Burton to his companion, when the latter had put his card on a pallet spread between two similarly covered tables, so as to make it a matter of nervous interest to its occupier, if the gentlemen who were to sleep on either side, were subject to sea sickness.

"A very cheerful place upon my word."

"It is very wretched indeed," said Walter.

"The ship is well found enough, but there are too many passengers."

"Well found, or well foundered—it is worse sir, than the House of Lords. But let us take a seat near those worthy gentlemen yonder, and keep our spirits up in this Death's drawing room, by a little brandy-and-water—if you prefer whiskey—"

"Anything you like," said his friend.

Brandy-and-water was therefore set before them, and Mr. Burton ran on in apostrophes regarding his determination to be merry—commiserative of his companion's journey to the North—and expressive of his dislike to the foreboding bustle going on around him. By and bye the cabin became more full—mail bags were tossed upon the tables—other noises besides the sound of footsteps were heard on the deck, and at last the steward called out in a sharp tone. "Now, gentlemen, now! the ship is going to start, such of you as are not going with us, had better go ashore." These words

were instantly followed by the loud ringing of a bell on deck—friends grasped hands in hasty leavetaking—ladies kissed one another—small children gave hiccupping pulings in sympathy, and a considerable number of persons hurried from the cabin.

"A boat comes out at Greenwich, does it not?" demanded Mr. Burton of the steward's boy.

"It does, sir," said the lad, looking intently at a fat old lady, who was scrambling up the cabin stairs in a state of temporary insanity produced by the clangour of the bell.

"Then we shall have another tumbler together," said Pontius, addressing Walter. "I can get up to town in ten minutes by the railway."

His companion thought this was hardly prudent, but he made no remark; and in a few minutes, the steam-boat was running down the middle of the black river, with the pilot shouting from her deck.

Mr. Burton's tumbler was not half finished, when the steward's boy told him they were approaching Greenwich, adding however as he noticed Mr. Burton's reluctant look, that there would be another boat at Gravesend.

"Then I shall go by it," he exclaimed. 'Plenty of night coaches. It is only a two hours' drive."

"Now this is folly," said his friend. "Pray do not take this round-about course on my account."

"Plenty of night coaches, plenty of night coaches," said Pontius. "I want a change of air, and the drive will do me good. If I am in town by twelve o'clock it will be time enough for my report—So let us be merry! although to be merry here, is like singing upon gravestones. This is a sad place to leave a friend in."

"It is very depressing indeed," said the other, "but I am somewhat used to such scenes."

A considerable time elapsed, during which Mr. Burton, assisted by an additional supply of brandy and water, was beginning to be much more reconciled to his position, when the steward's boy informed him, as he placed his third tumbler before him, that the vessel was off Gravesend.

"And how long will she stop here?"

"Not three minutes, sir, the boat is almost along-side."

Mr. Burton glanced ruefully at his tumbler. There it was before him, warm, pure, mantling in the light. "These are juggling comforts," said he bitterly, "that cheat us with the blessings of a public house, and pull a trap door under our feet when we begin to enjoy them."

"If you wish to stop a little longer, sir," said the boy, "the Pilot does not go ashore yet—you may land in his boat."

"Then I shall go by the Pilot boat," said Pontius promptly.

"You will have a rough sail, sir, if you stay

much longer though," said the lad, "the wind blows already as if it would knock the funnel off."

Walter said something to the same effect. "I don't mind it a rush," said the party addressed, drawing his warm tumbler nearer. "These fellows row like devils. I shall still get to town in ample time. It's not much more than ten o'clock yet."

"It's past eleven," said the boy.

"Well, well, well, my promising young friend. Attend to that gentleman in the striped night cap, he is calling for a basin."

By this time all the ladies had left the cabin, and a good number of the gentlemen passengers began to undress and retire to their cots; the sounds on deck became more monotonous, but the motion of the ship more uneasy.—It was evident they were fast escaping from the channel of the river.

"This brandy is good, very good," said Pontius, leisurely putting down his empty glass,

about a quarter of an hour after his last warning. "And now I think, I had better introduce myself to the Pilot."

"By all means," said Walter—and they proceeded together to the deck.

"Where is the Pilot?" asked Mr. Burton of a sailor in the act of passing him, as he stepped from the companion ladder.

"Gone ashore, sir," said the man without stopping.

"Gone ashore! and how the devil am I to get ashore?" demanded Pontius hastily.

The man was out of hearing.

"There is no means of getting ashore now, sir," said a small, square built, elderly man in a blue jacket—who happened to be the captain. "We are now out to sea."

"To sea! Ten thousand devils," cried Pontius furiously. "I must land!"

"That you will, please God, on the pier of Leith, in two days, if this squall don't get as

bad as it threatens. Starboard! starboard!" shouted the captain, hurrying on to the man at the helm, as a heavy sea struck the ship, and the spray drizzled over the deck.

The vessel suddenly began to pitch violently, and the darkness was rendered more desolate by the twinkling beacons they were fast receding from.

"I *must* get ashore," said Pontius resolutely. "What have I to do with all this? I'll swim ashore! rather than go to Scotland."

"It cannot be helped now," said Walter. "You have got into this dilemma on my account, and I shall endeavour to make things as comfortable for you as I can."

"It is impossible to make me comfortable, sir," said Mr. Burton, dropping down in despair into a wet seat.

"You will get soaked through if you sit there. Steward! pray bring up the cloak you will find on my bed, for this gentleman."

" Go below !" muttered Pon
" yes, I am going below—to the
I wish any body could tell me v
have to be here at all."

" Bring up the cloak."

" Here man," resumed Walter,
self up, you need not make matte
they are."

" They *cannot* be worse, sir," t
doggedly.

Meanwhile the wind was increa
rose violently, the paddle wheel
water irregularly, the huge ship
laboured with dismal energy, an
grew so black that the two or th
deck shone with a glimmering h

ing waves that crowded on her, pursuing her lonely course in the midst of darkness and storm. The squall, as the captain had called it had actively increased almost to a tempest, the vessel swang at times like a tub in the trough of waters, and the crumbling peaks of the waves that shot up around them, darted across the deck in foaming torrents, which other waves, breaking in thunder on the bow, capped and mingled with, until the struggling ship rose snorting from under the very sea.

Hollow groans, and sounds of that sort of suffering in which the mind as well as the body goes down with the stream, were heard at intervals from the gentlemen's cabin, mingled with more unrestrained clamour, heightened now and then by shrieks, from that of the other sex; where, in addition to other casualties, three ladies were in violent hysterics, the noise of which was much aggravated by one of them being a popular singer.

On the deck also the tumult increased.

Some of the passengers requested the captain to put back to the river, but he told them there was more danger now in returning, than in going on. Orders at last were given to lighten the vessel, by throwing overboard such part of the cargo as was on deck; and two or three new mail coaches thus ended their brief career by being run over the ship's-side, and heavily engulphed in an element unnatural to them; bales of goods, and even such part of the passengers' luggage as had not been yet stowed away, were similarly provided for, and the confusion occasioned by all this was increased by an unfounded report that a soldier's wife and two children had been engulphed in one of the coaches, and a Scotch attorney running about the deck in his drawers, like a person bereft of reason, at the loss of a black trunk containing title deeds of estates, and important documents regarding a disputed peerage.

"Let us go below for God sake," said Walter shaking his friend by the shoulder.

"We shall be washed overboard if we remain much longer here."

Mr. Burton's mind and body were now in a state that incapacitated him from having a will of his own, and Walter with some difficulty supported him to the cabin.

CHAPTER V.

In which the reader is introduced to ne new scene.

A storm had washed the dark, bee a wide range of precipitous coast o Scottish shore ; and many a poor its toil of weeks scattered by the spo which [illegible]

usually studded with long beaked mews, looking in the distance like broken glass on a huge garden wall, had for days, been laved by the curling, pressed up tide, or opposed iron bulwarks to the madly bounding waves, which breaking on them, threw up clouds of spray, glancing like diamond sparks in the stray rays of the struggling sun; the fisherman's moored boat now danced gently on the flickering waves, although the day before it had lain on its side high and dry on the rising beach, hauled beyond the touch of the boiling ripples, which had shot their creamy tendrils even into his cabbage yard; the screaming gulls flickered again around the rocks, their white plumage glancing against the black sea-weed—or sitting like spots of bright snow on the rise and fall of the cold, green sea; the seal shot out his dark, shining head as he tossed on the silver foam; and the rolling pebbles moaned in mimic thunder, on the narrow beaches of the landward cavities of the rocks.

precipitous cliffs beetled over
height making the waves below
than ripples; at one part ru
bold headland, on which a small
looking granite houses, was
this point, the same line of lofty c
again, and becoming more and
cloud-like as it receded, until at l
with the pale dimness of the horiz

Towards the south, about half
the same point of view, the li
ended somewhat abruptly, at a
hid the mouth of a rapid river;
yond being lower, and marked
line of smooth sand, until another
it entirely from view.

The -

vessels having left the roadsteads, to which they had run for shelter, were now sailing placidly by, under full canvass on which black patches of wet could still be seen—those creeping close along the coast, seeming, from the height of the land, so near to the shore, that one might have fancied a stone could be thrown from the cliffs on their decks—while near the creek-like mouth of the harbour, one or two pilot boats were rising and dipping among the quiet waves, with their feathery oars throwing up glancing sparks, when the black hulls of the buoyant little crafts seemed at moments to sink beneath the tide.

The day was fair, but its very calmness was not serene, it had the bleak stillness of winter, as if cold and storm still lurked in the atmosphere; and the beautiful clouds, lazily as they crept over spots of deep, pure blue, were yet changeful and uncertain. The swift mountain streamlet, of a cold, blueish white-looking, as if formed of melted ice, ran down the inclined

plane, which centuries had worn for it through the iron cliffs, its clear, tinkling sound mingling with the dull sea roar among the tossing pebbles, like the sweet voice of childhood, blending with the full tones that swell through the lofty arches of an ancient church—the rooks sat moodily on the pine tree tops, now and then opening their wings, as if they longed for a breeze to cradle them—there was no wild bird's song in the sunshine, no whistle from the ploughed fields, for it was winter, and a sabbath day.

Looking more landward, the scenery in the back ground, in spite of the season, was magnificent and beautiful—A range of bare, lonely hills gradually rising to vastness of height, shadowed in the extent of view, except at one place, where a deep ravine—that formed the pass to a long glen or highland valley, through which ran the river already mentioned—allowed glimpses of hazy, clustering mountains stretching far in the distance, to elongate that point

of the horizon; and more northward, towards the town, broad sweeping plains studded with brown fir plantations, formed parts of gently rising grounds, imperceptible in their ascent, until here and there, green hill tops that rose above them, showed that they really were braes, or sides of those acclivities. Here stood the ruins of one of those strong, square towers of the Scottish barons in the iron days, hoary, defaced, and hollow, like a dead man's skull—nearer the town, one or two gentlemen's seats gave more cheerfulness to the prospect, and the eye ran over a crowded succession of square fields, tall hedge rows, and strong, granite-built cottages, looking amid the bare trees, almost too cold and stern for verdure to twine upon.

But the most striking object between the town, and the point from which the reader has been content to look on the scene, was a churchyard of some extent, occupying a rising ground. It is true that the sea, the cliffs, and even the

tall, bare, church spire (a painful masonworklike modern structure) seemed to command more instant attention, but this churchyard, when the eye once fell on it, kept it there for a longer time. The high road and a kind of sandy lawn, on which hearse-wheels had made a heavy carriage way, separated it from the edge of the cliffs, which here were shelving and covered with spiry grass; the large, white, painted gate, flanked by two square pillars of granite, on the tops of which were balls of the same hard stone, gave creaking entrance to the place of graves; the hill with its grey headstones breasted high above the churchyard wall, and the ruins of an ancient church, the belfry of which was all that now remained distinct, lay crumbling and hoary, amid the white marble squares on the rich men's tombs, and the melancholy luxuriance of tufted grass.

And now, small groups and solitary figures moved, or remained stationary amid the tombs, that looked more lonely from an intrusion

which put their aspect and associations in such sad relief. The mourning weeds and motionless appearance of some of those living figures, the holiday dress and sauntering movements of others, with here and there the rambling gambols of childhood over the unconscious mounds, gave a character to the picture, which made the eye indisposed to quit it hastily. At once place the widow was sitting by the fresh, new stone, which her humble means had placed at her husband's head—all of whose faults are forgotten now! no panegyric on the dead was ever so eloquent as that care-worn countenance—she is thinking there, it may be, of the gentle moments of kindly intercourse —the love he had borne her, and the sweet place which she, now alone in the pitiless world, had ever filled in his heart—of many a kind look, many a soothing, sustaining word, when other griefs—and how poor do such seem now!—pressed upon her—many a self-sacrificing act, which she had never acknow-

.. none to greet her, and wh
there will be none to heed! At a
the erect form of manhood was
side a new grave—that of the ge
for years had slept in confiding
his bosom—and his hard countem
quent. He too, it may be, has to
a desolate hearth, where no fond
earnest enquiries will meet him
may listen to his children's prattle
in vain for the sweet face that w
joined him in the smile—he has n
to seek to share his thoughts, to
his happiness with disinterested
knowledge of life tells him that th
of even his children, will in a few
into channels which ...

it is woman's dearest hope to do—she has made not life, but the grave dear to him. And at another spot, beside a little mound, the newly-placed turf of which was still brown, a group of children dressed in mourning, looking with subdued countenances on the grave of a brother or sister—who it may be had often whispered with them, as they grouped round the winter hearth, but some short months ago, of the horrors of the churchyard at black midnight, when the sighing wind sweeps over the tombs —tales of terror they had all liked, yet dreaded to hear—and now the absent one lies in this dreaded place, and the rain, and wind, and darkness are here, when they sleep soundly, forgetting one who shared their society, and their love. And moving around such as these, were many who had sauntered to the churchyard from other and less pious motives, of which perhaps the most general was, that it was shut out from them on other days.

There was a certain loneliness in this point

of the scene. The broad sea rippled within a gunshot of the churchyard gate, the dim vista of grey mountains, fading in majestic bareness, was on a line with it in the back ground; there were no trees near the place, a kind of downs, and a miserable common swept for some distance about it on the landward sides; the whole object was distinct, coldly marked, and unrelieved by the faintest connecting line of harmony with the picturesque scenery near it. It seemed as if here, on the face of nature itself, an iron pen had written, sepulchre.

It may be it was with such impressions as these that a man, still young, but of later youth, stood looking on the place from the gate of a neat cottage, occupying the spot by the perspective from which the description has been drawn. It stood at some distance from the high road; a miniature lawn, a small shrubbery, gardens and evergreens were around it, and the appearance of the cottage itself was that rather of a rich man's retreat than a poor man's home.

A small board intimating that it had been "to let furnished," had its pole torn up, and lay carelessly among some small fir trees.

The gentleman's eyes were fixed on the churchyard with an intensity that an artist might have envied, and perhaps struggled to effectively imitate in a looking-glass when studying his own portrait; but it was evident that the gazer was none of such, his handsome features wanted the open, genial enthusiasm of a lover of beauty for its own sake; if he were an artist at all, it was one of life, and not of nature's aspects. The countenance was striking, reflective, and noble; a countenance that woman loves, because free from the hardness of expression which the smaller thoughts of the world, when they engross the mind, never fail to give; as well as perhaps from wanting that character which is read easily. It was the face of one which few of his own sex would be induced to reckon on as a likely victim of art, many might indeed be inclined to trust,

were stamped on features v
ever of that character tha
these, the dark eye was
reposing passion, and the p
which age itself could har
appearance in other respect
tional elements of taste, from
ficial or speculative vulgar dec
of castes—was that of a gen
in a marked degree.

A large, smooth, tawny-
chested, wolf dog, the rep
descendant of the denounced
hound, crouched lazily at his
then turning its black muzz
dark eyes, like a drow-

some assault on its master, which might give license to tear the intruder limb from limb. Nothing however of the sort occurred, to enable the brute to gratify a craving for excitement of such a questionable kind; even the rustic curs that occasionally trotted by, on the grassy, tall hedged lane—that, branching from the grey highway, ran by the cottage gate—made peaceable circles round the spot, with their cropped tails pressed anxiously to their stiffened haunches, as if to avoid any encounter with the aristocratic, dogmatical looking dog, whose look alone was enough to deject them; and the holiday dressed lover, with his bonny lass, whose courtship had proceeded so far that they scrupled not to be seen in the sunlight together, yet still preferred the shady ways—turned his eyes, in unacknowledged deference, from the patrician's face, annoyed that in his sweetheart's presence he should shrink from the look of any man, and wishing for the moment, in the angry love of vantage, that the cold-eyed gentleman would

by and bye a lady came f
and joined him with a smile.
the steel mask vanished from
and when she took his arm, a
flush rose to his cheek.

She was very beautiful.
which sculptor ever lightened
were not more perfect than th
that delicate countenance; in
itself, it might have challenged t
cism of his art. Her mouth
instinct with the unobtrusive be
jewel which is our own—her fi
but rounded in the soft fulness o
hood; and its freest movement h
grace which fair proportions best
furred dress, the [illegible]

since our arrival here," remarked the lady as they left the cottage gate. "How beautiful this place will be when summer comes."

"It is some months till then," observed her companion thoughtfully.

"Not so very many; and spring is close at hand. In a week or two the buds will be out, and ere next month be past, the oldest of those beeches will be in foliage. I have the time reckoned, for you know September is the month that emancipates me. What a place for a lover's cottage, what quiet walks there must be in those deep woods, so solitary, so removed from the world.—Shakespeare's forest of Arden is not more sylvan. Or by the river side, by its finely wooded banks, and through all those windings that you may trace if you look over those broken hills. How beautiful all will be in summer. Look at that grey peak, how it stands against the sky—that ruin, what a character it gives to the loneliness of the noble back ground—and there again, those

rocks that throw their dark shadows on the green level of the sea, and all those rising grounds, how beautiful they will be when they have the green of summer on them. And then—nay let me follow out my picture—the sweet hawthorn that will whiten these thick hedges—the birds, the deep, clear sky—I should think such scenes with a heart at ease, would confer a happiness that would belie our lot."

"A fair picture," said the other, "yet to me this prospect you have painted, sweet and beautiful as it is, has not more charms than a picture I can draw, without such sunny colouring—than yesterday, when those rocks were beaten by the high waves, and the white spray, flying from their tops, struck the windows of the very room in which we stood; and there, at that bend of the coast—it is hardly to be noticed here, but from our window it looks like a little bay—when it was covered with brown yeasty foam, which also flew from the

boiling surge, and fell in thick drift on the breast of that churchyard hill—when the flying clouds were so low, that that very peak rose above their charms—when the two eagles you were so delighted to see, broke through the storm, making sweeps so near as that we fancied we could hear the flapping of their wings, then rising till the pierced clouds hid them again—when those tall pine trees, now so erect, swung till it seemed their bases would snap, or their strained roots tear up the very masses of rock to which they clung. You spoke of a lover's cottage—it should be among such scenes as these—for it is the storm, the terror without, whether of nature or of life, that makes woman cling to man—it is the world's bleakness beyond, that makes her most his own."

The lady did not speak—and they proceeded for some time in silence.

"Is it then really so?" she demanded, "is it after all a truth, that your sex despise the quiet

of nature and life, and that love with them is a passion secondary to more active hopes?"

She turned earnestly towards him, as she demanded this. Her companion looked to the beautiful countenance, his eyes changed their expression—but the covert passion which might have been detected in them, was rebuked by the soft, rich tones of the voice in which he answered her.

"The solitude of summer woods," said he, smiling with that peculiar sweetness which is only seen in countenances unused to smile—"the secluded walks by the winding banks of a mountain river, the soft, pure air, the wild flowers, and the song of birds; have influences genial of feelings, which the world laughs at, while it cherishes. The rich man on the city pavement, who has nothing but contempt for such an enumeration, has still a corner in his heart for the things themselves, and the man of ambition, who would cheat us all into the belief that he has no leisure for love, has,

unacknowledged to himself, a craving deeper than even his desire of distinction—to be loved devotedly, and for himself alone. Perhaps he does not seek for it to cheer him in his toils, but he ever looks for it as the reward of them. Or, if age has crept on him at his desolate hearth, and rendered the hope no longer tenable, except in moments of exhilaration, when stimulated by the shouts of admiring partizans, the miserable man imagines himself a sort of God that can triumph over nature itself—the engrossing pursuit of that which is supposed to supply the place of such a feeling in his heart, is a poor farce, like that of a doomed man playing chess, when he hears his scaffold building. If there is happiness on earth, it is through that on which your sex are said to found it; and were it ever met with in full measure, this world would have something of paradise in it still."

"And is it never found?" demanded the

because it requires vast fai
other, with a bitterness which
hide, " because chance creates it
takes it away. Because, althou
sweetest pleasures of life, we n
eyes to enjoy it thoroughly."

Again the lady was silent. Tl
reached the summit of a rising g
the lane run over; the scene that
before them was magnificent,
paused to look upon it. The sinki
a majesty to the distant mountains,
to bring them nearer.

" How beautiful is this scene," s
observed, " every object adds to it,
churchyard—and it haunts me in
have never

"And what would ye hae! my braw leddy —what would ye hae?" demanded a harsh voice near them. "Would ye have roses to bloom over dead men's banes—would ye have a summer house and honeysuckle at the kirk gard gate, and high trees growing among the mounds, wi' lang tough roots to weary an auld man's spade. High yirls and doughty lords, gentle knights, and faces as young and fair as yours, have been buried there. It's a bonny kirkyard, and a well cared for ane."

"And that's as true as death, Simeon," chimed in another voice. "It's as bonny a kirkyard as ever the moon shined on."

The speakers were now in a line with them —the first who had spoken paused, and raised his hat respectfully, notwithstanding the unceremoneous manner in which he had addressed them, was a hale looking man, somewhat turned of sixty, with hard acquiline features, short grizzled hair, and small black eyes, dry and bright as beads. He wore a coarse, but

[illegible] antiquity.

But it was the appearance of
that arrested their steps; even t
dog twitched back its ears, an
him for a moment or two inq
was a man—that was evident fron
beard, but beyond that, nothing
general description that applies
can be given. In the first place, c
of his body appeared to be jerke
inches higher than the other, the l
so elevated making his gait a sort
hop; part of the upper lip, and
(both of which were covered witl
even the eye on this side of the he
of a corresponding elevation: this
being also larger than its fellow

surmounted by a highland bonnet, round which a piece of faded black crape was tied in a large knot behind, the ends reaching half way down his back—he wore a corderoy jacket, also having a piece of crape on one of his arms, a blue worsted petticoat did its best to unsex him, and he carried a strong cudgel over his shoulder, in the way pursy old gentlemen carry their canes. This worthy also stood still the moment his companion paused, and as the latter now recommenced speaking, kept his large eye with the smaller one toiling after it, wandering with a rocketory expression of great curiosity, from the lady to her companion, and from him back to the lady again.

"A fine evening, and blessed weather, for lawfu' travellers, and the ploughed lan'," resumed the first speaker. "I will be wi' yer honour betimes the morn'. It will be a gracious morning, I mak', nae doubt—for there is a braw sunset coming on, and there will be a new moon, and if it be heaven's will a rolly borry

pie), and pay respect unto d
mind me," continued he, fixin
on the lady, " say nae a word a
yard, neither mak' nor meddle
Look to the living, and your ain
the dead rest.—I wish your
e'en'."

" Who is that person?" dem
as they walked in from the spot.

" The sexton—the grave-digg
ton."

" The grave-digger! he seems
too."

" He was the first person I spo
arrival here. I don't know how
man always now crosses my path.

"And his companion, who is he?"

"I never saw him before—he seems some fool, some wondering idiot of which there are more in this country than I believe in all christendom put together. But look now to the west."

The sun had sank beneath the range of bare hills, but its rich rays still streamed on the pale clouds that trembled under the dazzling splendour of its gorgeous light, the blue peaks of the lonely mountains lost their bleakness, and rose like glorious things against the beams that broke upon them, flashing from their illuminated edges, and bursting into the dim twilight of the valley; far along the whole line the mountains were illuminated like the bulwarks of a fairy land. And as the strangers stood watching the changes of the sky, and the shadows slowly chilling the mountain's bases and creeping upward to their darkening tops, the quiet of the wintry day increased to peace, the hollow continuous sound from the sea-

the bald sea rock, the clouds gr
to a dull, cold grey, and the s
green. Night was coming on;
returned towards the cottage.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the sensation produced in Skerryton.

It must not be supposed that the arrival of such a person as an English baronet—for it is now necessary to tell the reader that the gentleman mentioned in the preceding chapter was Sir Edmund Arden, particularly as he had brought two ladies with him—had been unnoticed or unregarded in Skerryton. To say that it created a sensation would be pastoral poetry—words; a little hare-lipped member

...sisted the revenue a
sumption of genuine tea, a
evening parties. It was a wa
good fortune had sent them
topic of general interest, bette
duction of gas, or the suicide
inhabitant; people spoke abo
met in the street, and did not
say; before dinner, when suffe
infliction of bashfulness and lig
even at funerals, when they sat t
distressing state in the quiet r
appear at ease, yet not daring to
forward for fear of encounterin
each other. Young ladies saw
appearance thrown into the sh
utter darkness

men entered into feuds with their own clothes, to which they attributed their want of that gentlemanlike air which it pained them to behold in the baronet, as he walked through their town in a way, which without being arrogant, shewed them that he thought as lightly of it as if it were a rabbit warren—while the worried milliners run about to get glimpses of the lady when they heard she was in town, and perplexed tailors, really anxious to give satisfaction, threw up their windows to look after Sir Edmund, when the bandy-legged urchins in carpet shoes, who had been set on watch, ran up stairs to inform them that he was passing that way.

Skerryton was a strange town, and its inhabitants a peculiar people. Although within sight of the highlands, being a sea port, it had few highland characteristics to throw a tartan mantle over the small weaknesses incident to such busy-body communities. Its upper classes were chiefly composed of small landed

...inants, retired i
den to their friends, at
shipowners, and tradesmen
trates, or had made sma
these were added an unusual
gentlewoman, who might be
looking steadfastly into the
furnished rooms, remote cous
highland houses, and gentlemei
the mother's side. Mere high
had latterly been regarded with
respect in Skerryton, since a li
who was descended from the Lc
had been in the habit of getti
rolling in the gutters.

The clergyman of the paris
white haired ...

was their custom to take to the minister's boat, and row themselves sober again. They had twice, by a kind of miracle, escaped drowning in these excursions, and at one time having been caught in a fog, followed by a sudden tempest, were picked up far off at sea by a vessel bound for Newfoundland, and would in all probability have been taken thither, had the ship not fallen in with a Dutch lugger, which carried them both to Rotterdam. The minister returned just in time to prevent his own funeral sermon being preached, a composition with which he was so pleased, that he purchased it of the author for two gallons of old whiskey, and afterwards preached it himself on the occasion of the death of a chief magistrate of the town, who had died in his bed—the flights of fancy, about dolphins and the wonders of the deep, going down very well with his hearers, the defunct having made his money by privateering. On other occasions his sermons were taken from a pile of manuscripts which he had

through. He always preacl
but for any spiritual benefit t
his discourses, he might as w
the multiplication table. Thi
his enemies had to say against
inveterate habit of going to
singing of the psalms, on whi
Delvin, the sexton, would coc
pulpit stairs, and shake the n
shoulders, whispering " it's don
the psalm—to which the good
he spoke of the whiskey) wo
drowsily reply, " Weel, weel,
the black can at the head o' the
withstanding all this the mi
living in defiance of his enemie

Michael Armstrong—such was the gentleman's name—he never interfered in municipal politics, he was a bachelor, and therefore had nothing to do with questions of gentility and rivalries of precedence, he was very hospitable, kind to the poor, and would put his name to any document where his signature could be of the slightest use, provided it was not a bill, or a promissory note.

And let not the intellectual reader laugh at such matters as questions of precedence in country towns; for many such have come to these places to sneer, and remained to be violently affected by them. Skerryton, as its upper classes were wont to remark, was a terribly exclusive place, and in stormy weather it was incontrovertibly so—at least on the sea side. It had its first circle, its debateable circle, and vast lower circle, which again had such circles that nobody but an entymologist could classify. These ingenious ramparts of demarcation were mounted by the ladies, and

yet both benedicts and ba
acutely, and were as anxio
garding them as the other se

The upper circles of Ske
posed of ladies who wore p
muffs in winter, and gold wa
These armorial bearings of c
male branches of their famili
been said, were secretly as j
as the ladies were. Public op
badges of aristocracy within
the set, and if on any remarl
Mrs. this or that, not duly lic
muff, should with trembling kn
the church aisle with such a
riery, pressed hysterically to

her thigh—the sneers of the aristocracy, the scoffs of the democracy, and the tittle tattle of all, seldom failed to make the poor creatures abandon a position which they lacked moral courage to sustain.

Now it was of course the upper circles of Skerryton, who were most anxiously inquisitive regarding the new comers. The dread lest any of their own set should make their acquaintance, and hence take the lead in the town, the anxiety to know who the gentleman was and to whom he was related, the restless inquisitiveness regarding the younger lady, who it was confidently stated rouged—although she was remarkably pale—the French servant who spoke English with difficulty, and walked to the post office quietly, instead of skipping along the streets in a *pas seul*; the lady's maid, whom a milliner had seduced to take tea with her, and who afterwards, in the confidence of a heart opened by seed cake and currant wine, had declared that she knew

the landlady of an hotel-
drove the curiosity of Sk
easy stage of madness, an
exercise an injurious influen
health.

But this was a state of th
not continue long. It happe
ing party in which the matter w
a venerable man with silver ha
every body to a conclusion, took
cles, put them in their red m
then in a slow, patriarchal voice
he remembered that at a time
light hearted boy in knee breec
came to the town, who had crea
nearly equal to this. It was

had a habit of swearing. That it being the time of war, it was thought by some, they were spies, a very uneasy conjecture as the guns which protected the town, were of solid wood, painted black, with red touchholes — others thought that they were jacobites who had been out in—45, and that the consequence of course would be the confiscation of the whole town for the benefit of the state. But not to dwell on this distressing state of things, it was proposed to get up a ball, under the patronage of the volunteers and justices of the peace, to which the strangers should be invited, in order to find out if they really were spies or disaffected persons, and that this had succeeded to the satisfaction of every body; for although they were closely watched, they neither winced at passing a corporal's guard at the door, nor made mouths when the band played "God save the King." He therefore thought that a ball—but no more could be heard for all the young gentlemen in the room shouted out, "hear, hear!"

...ceived, the sage was si
all the company, and th
upon that night.

And now succeeded the
the committee of manag
task of determining who w
not be allowed to put thei
scription list—the ballottin
to be invited, the heartburnin
the agony of the greater porti
ble circle, who on this cruel
bitterness of their condition,
for an earthquake, or some su
to crush the whole affair;
being considerably aggravate
own class having been consid
thus obtaining

exciting matters, the original object of the ball was for a time lost sight of, until when all these interesting preliminaries were settled, the committee called on Baillie Boortree, the supreme magistrate of the town, to carry their invitation to the strangers; this mode of procedure being thought more respectful, than sending them one of the circulars—which were very pretty things, written on polished pink note paper, sealed with sky blue wax, bearing the impression, "Though lost to sight, to memory dear."

The Baillie, who had always an eye to business, saw in this request something that he might possibly turn to advantage, besides he had a family to whom the preference thus shewn him might be useful. He accordingly at once acceded to the request of the committee, resolving to take with him his youngest son and daughter, the former, a smart young man of twenty, who generally superintended the fireworks on the King's birth days,

gistrate was so elated at the
he rose in the committee roo
called it a high and distingu
the words recalling others t
produced together, he ended
it was the proudest moment o

But was not Mrs. Boortre
that day? Civic honours were
Her daughter was to be taken
English lady, for great she w
was, although she had rather d
And her daughter would be so
the lady, as she had done every
gentleman, a half-pay officer, w
great deal of the world, for he
quartered at Botany Bay, bes
great man—

and then the questions that every body would have to ask their family regarding the strangers, particularly the gentleman, who it was whispered, could at times look as black as thunder, and spoke to nobody but the grave-digger, who was a man that nobody else cared to have anything to do with—all these, and other bright distinctions crowded on the worthy lady's mind with an intensity that deprived her of sleep for the greater part of the night.

The following day, much to the satisfaction of every body, but the members of the debateable circle, was calm and fair, and the baillie set off with his fascinating daughter and promising son, to explore the mysteries of the stranger's cottage. His exemplary wife had tied his white neckcloth with her own active hands, his black coat had been dusted and brushed with the officious attention of an old clerk who lived in the family, his shirt was white as driven snow, when it has the happiness to fall on clean places, and the gloves he wore

rings of shining gold, his
which now, like a matron
surrendered for the public
breeches, preserved in towe
been decently aired at the
and were now worn by the
One half of a white cambri
chief, also his wife's, had beei
having a brass ounce weigh
tened to the end, the other ha
over his brushed coat-skirts;
wood staff with an ivory top,
magisterial hand. Many a
the baillie as he proceeded u
where, at the cross, there wa
of Sir William Wallace

yet keeping their necks literally straight, like buckram suited members of a procession or the stage—while the bell-ringer, who happened to want a small advance on his salary, now ventured to ring the bell, an idea of his own, which the Baillie called 'nonsense' to his children; but every peal of which, went to the heart of every member of the debateable circle.

CHAPTER

How Baillie Beortree called on S
the reception he met with.

It was with no small surprise
Arden, as he sat in the br
the cottage, was told by h
secretary, confidential henchr
name which Auguste Gill-

time to answer all the rapid questions of his master, another servant, a Scotch 'gardener lad,' entered the room with a large card, on which was written, in a clear copying clerk's hand—"Baillie Boortree and Sundries."

"Who is this person," demanded Sir Edmund sharply.

"Person!" exclaimed the 'gardener lad,' "It's no a person!—it's the Baillie."

"And who is the Baillie," demanded his master, "and what does he want with me?"

"That's no for me to ken," answered the Scotsman, "but here he is, sure enough, and Maister Joseph and Miss Priscella wi' him."

"Well," said the gentleman, biting his lips impatiently, "shew them all in, in the devil's name."

The next minute the Baillie, with his "sundries," entered the room, and Monsieur Auguste, after giving such a look to the young lady as a connoiseur bestows on a painting, glided from the apartment.

sir."

Sir Edmund bowed cc

"And my posterior c
cella," continued the magi
lady dropped a curtsey
made Sir Edmund start.
commercial men have not l
you know the poet says—'
of course you know all abo
is like taking coals to Ne
writers to the signet, to b
tions here," added the Baill
his offspring doing the same
mechanically sinking dow
again.

"Rapid weather

for the winter turnips. We have some of the genuine Swedish in this part of the country."

"The Tobago does best in the clay soil though, father," said Mr. Joseph, essaying to speak.

"Quite right, Joseph—quite right," said the Baillie, "but a good deal depends on a southerly exposure—as of course Sir Edmund knows."

The gentleman alluded to merely bowed, but rather in a perplexed way.

"These, sir, you see, are my children," said the Baillie, "and although I say it, that should not say it, I am not ashamed of them. Priscella there, was twenty-two her last birth-day, and has had several offers of marriage, many of them of a rather flattering kind, but none of her suitors, you see, sir, had (sinking his voice) a nice garden, and she is so fond of making preserves! I may say that is her weakness, her only weakness, for she can lift

... is beyond anything of the
stood in my young days. But you
Hora fugit. And I dare say tha
was in town with you yesterday,
stranger in these parts, will be abl
ciate these accomplishments, althou
fess they are rather out of my way.
the wine and spirit business, sir."

Sir Edmund, who was wondering
was any connection between Baillie a
and if there could be any writs ou
him, did not notice this peroratio
way.

" Now," continued the magistrate,
so much accustomed to have all the ta
self every where but at home, that h
notice the hesi-

teeth are longer than his beard yet. That young man, sir, will write out a receipt, although it should be on stamped paper with an accuracy and expedition which is wonderful at his age. His schoolmaster often told me that he never had a boy with such a talent for bills of parcels and the cube root; and last year, sir, he copied out the Skerryton address to the king, which was presented to his Majesty by our county Member, whose third cousin, a customer of mine, sir, and a first rate one he would be if he had the gift of paying his debts—this gentleman, sir, told me in private confidence, that His Majesty was much struck with the beauty of the handwriting, and expressed an anxious wish to see the young man at Court, if it would not interfere with his commercial duties. But you will fancy I think my geese are all swans, and perhaps it is now fit I should tell you the object of our visit."

"If you please, sir," said the other.

"Your arrival here—so far from home—if I

have hardly ever seen be
pitable people, sir, as you
great number of spirit me
By the bye, I understand
with Mr. Findlay. Now, s
man to say any thing again
for I often remark to Mrs.
business of mine, how Mr. Fi
affairs, it only concerns hims
have the misfortune to dea
this I will say to you, as you
stranger, if you want really
Mr. Findlay's shop is not th
at. Now I have in my po
brandy—there is 'black dr
the phial, but it has been

brandy, I shall send for it, and if the object of your visit only relates to matters of that kind, you must excuse my observing, that I am particularly engaged this morning, and have no leisure to attend to them."

"They do not, they do not," said the Baillie hastily, pocketing the affront and the phial together. It is regarding this Ball, of which I have no doubt you have heard."

"No, sir," said the other ;" I have heard of nothing of the sort."

"The Committee of Management, sir, have deputed me to request the honour of the company of yourself and ladies, as the ball has been got up on your account."

"On our account!" said the other laughing. "Upon my word, sir, I am very much obliged to them."

"I thought it would please you, sir. The young and gay it's joy there all, what would deprive them of a ball?"

We are to have musicians from Inverness, and

... a sole on the b
to be let off a bill he ow
payment of which he ha
—and five shillings pocke

"I certainly feel very r
this," said the other, "b
cannot avail ourselves of i
for the purpose of retireme

The Baillie was so unprep
it was a moment or two e
"This will be an easterly wi
tee," said he, "a heavy bl
couragement to the ball."

"I am sorry for it," said t
is impossible for us at pres
such invitation."

"I had propos-

of cauliflowers in the Town Hall, the prize, a pitch-fork, painted green, and a garden rake of the same colour, I had hoped one of the ladies would deliver to the successful candidate—all this and the private theatricals in the Free Mason's Lodge, the tragedy of Douglass, the part of Lady Douglass, sir, by a clever young man of our town of a literary turn, who writes out all our advertisements — with the after piece of the Highland Reel—all that, sir, and the bonfires are now extinguished. I am sorry it has been my lot to be the messenger of evil tidings. My feet will be no longer beautiful on the mountains! And what will Mrs. Boortree say?"

"Ay, pa," said Miss Priscella, "what *will* Ma say?"

"Heaven only knows," said the Baillie "but I shall hear it all—there's no doubt of that."

It was with some trial of patience that Sir Edmund listened to his visiter's entreaties, to

... then when he found he wa
regard to this—to a request tha
tirement, he would take tea with
where he would have an opportu
Miss Priscella play, and of seein
and when that too failed—that he
pany him to visit the Town E
slaughter-house, and other natu
of the place—all these and other
magistrate, to obtain some promise
break the fall of his own defeat,
made in vain, the unfortunate
length, greatly to Sir Edmund's r
take leave. This was made a shor
that gentleman took the earliest op
ring the bell for a servant to op
and the Baillie ha-

preceded him, Joseph foolishly, and Miss Priscella who inherited her mother's "spirit," indignantly snuffing the air.

The door had been shut, and Sir Edmund thrusting the poker into the grate was mentally framing a law for his servants, which should for the future prevent him from being the subject of any similar intrusion, when to his surprise the Baillie and all again appeared with the "gardener lad," at their head.

"I have lost one of my rings," said the Baillie, "perhaps I have dropped it on the floor."

The carpets were examined, their corners turned up, the sofa was made to rise up like a giraffe, and at last the servant declared that the Baillie must have lost it by the way.

"I don't know that," said the Baillie, "I took off my glove here. But perhaps, sir, (turning to Sir Edmund) you may find it, and I know if you do, it will be—quite safe."

Again they all disappeared, and Sir Edmund,

preparing to leave
Baillie once more thru
apartment.

" There's a large dog !"
trate in a startled manner.

" Kick that dog out of
Edmund fairly losing his t
these people out !"

CHAPTER VIII.

"How the sensation at Skerryton encreased, and how the reader is introduced to old acquaintances at a time of high festivity."

The Committee of Management were a good deal disconcerted on receiving a note that evening from Baillie Boortree, intimating to them in the shortest way he could, the unsuccessful issue of his mission, but without entering into any particulars. It was, therefore, resolved upon that no ball should take place, as there was now no pretext or occasion for it. The

news flew over the town; the committee, from being the envied dispensers of tickets, became like other possessors of power, laughing stocks to the ill natured, and objects of pity to the humane. The debateable circle were loud and joyous in their comments, and several families of that class who were on the eve of leaving town for a few days, just to be out of the way, now resolved to stay at home. The country paper came out the following day with a long paragraph by the clever gentleman who wrote advertisments, all about the approaching ball, the solo on the bagpipes, and the band from Inverness, together with lines said by him to have been written in the ball room, and which were intended for *next week's* number, when the ball would have been over, but which by mistake, were put into the paper of that day. The innkeeper sent a polite note to the committee, intimating that he had commenced preparations according to order, and by the advice of his lawyer would continue them, even to

lighting up the large room on the night proposed; and having the band playing to nobody till four in the morning, as he had a large family.

There never had been such commotion in Skerryton since the rebellion of —45, when a party of highlanders plundered the town, and only spared the ladies, through a timely contribution of cheese. Trade suffered, the learned professions were depressed, and the clever gentleman declared that it was his opinion he should have to write an advertisement, under the title of a town to let. Nothing was spoken of, nothing was thought of but the ball—the ball that had been built on a foundation of sand, of shifting sand, of quicksand, of such sand as was only to be found in Skerryton.

Even old men, who one would have thought out of the pale of such matters, took an interest in what was going on, and declared that such a thing would not have happened when they were young. A fashionable hair dresser from

London, had his sign board, on which was painted Absolum hanging on a tree (illustrative of the advantages of long hair), turned upside down—ladies who had been preparing dresses, observed they had second cousins in the army, and were not to be trifled with; while to crown all, several fiery young men had high words in the public reading room with the harassed members of the committee, and a challenge was actually sent from one young gentleman, to one of them, a quiet man, who had nine children. This gentleman did not want pluck, and thought little of death; being a married man, his wife got a hint of the matter from the gentleman himself, but she was a highland lady, and did not interfere, from an idea that a duel might be useful to her daughters. Everything was arranged, but the young gentleman who had sent the challenge happened to knock up a grocer at midnight to sell him gunpowder for the occasion, observing that he would not have disturbed

him, but he forgot to buy it during the day, and he had to fight a duel on the following morning. The consequence of which was that (the grocer being a peaceable man, for all that he sold gunpowder) both gentlemen were bound over to keep the peace, a thing which on reflection they both agreed to do, rather than suffer confinement, the young man being afraid to be left alone in the dark, and his antagonist having the liver complaint. Mr. Armstrong next sunday selected a sermon, having for its text the subject of Herodias dancing before King Herod, and the Baillie, who had been snubbed in presence of an observant daughter, who of course told her mother, who of course snubbed the Baillie, telling him whenever he wanted anything, even a jug of shaving water, to apply to Sir Edmund Arden for it—declared that if matters went much further about this accursed ball, he would resign the magistracy, and retire into private life.

Things could not go on long in this way, and the committee, saddled as they were with the consequences of their own hasty imprudence, saw that their only chance of quiet days was to have a ball at all hazards, to silence murmurs, and stop attorneys letters, each of which must cost somebody three and fourpence—although they could not help feeling it to be an unprecedented thing in Skerryton, to have a ball without some public occasion for it. On this, things took another turn, the hair dresser put his signboard in its original position, and Absolom in a decent attitude, the debateable circle became again depressed, and the patricians joyous in their envied rank.

Well, the ball was resolved on, and the ball day came. Flys flew about the small town—hair dressers ran from house to house, with combs and curling irons in their aprons—old servants came to see young ladies in their ball dresses, and drank their health before they

started—a crowd surrounded the inn door, and several special constables were sworn in for the occasion. All the beauty and fashion of Skerryton were gathered to one place, and the streets, the lighted shops, and the deserted houses looked forlorn.

Not so "The Romantic Thistle," as the inn was called; its windows glowed, and the sounds of musicians tuning their instruments broke forth on the listening crowd. In the large room were wax candles burning in dozens, evergreens, and wind instrument players, fiddlers, a great number of whom were blind, the highland gentleman of good family decently dressed, and the landlord whisking about, flurrying himself and the waiters, as well as two men engaged for the night. The committee, with roses of blue ribbons pinned on their coats—which were always falling off—ladies in muslin dresses, and gentlemen in white waistcoats—dowagers and matrons in velvet turbans, took their seats in rows on the strong dealwood forms,

the ladies to take off their l
in, and finally examine their
nances, before they ventured
glare of the chandelliers.

The ball room soon beca
first set of quadrilles was forı
being all sober, gave reality
commencing to play. It was
tense interest, yet nobody, a
remarked, lost their presence o
it was a moment of dreadfu
such young ladies as were n
aristocracy. Young gentleme
description, now began to suffe
a successful moving of the eart
to get there—they walked ab

ladies as retired, finding a sort of relief in doing something, and feeling bitterly the erroneous estimate they had taken of themselves before entering on the scene. Young gentlemen of "the set" positively revelled in easy confidence, uttering bon mots not only to their own partners, but to the ladies opposite to them, to the ladies of other couples, and even to the ladies behind them on the forms—happy were they in the dismal eyes of the stray gentlemen of the debateable circle, happy in handing ladies to their seats, standing before them, smiling, and pulling down their white waistcoats, just as if they were their brothers.

Only one of these victims of proscription ventured to attempt emancipation, by dancing with one of the patrician fair. Unluckily the lady he asked was Miss Priscella Boortree. At first, she seemed rather taken by surprise at the request, but, as before observed, inheriting her mother's spirit, she drew herself up, looked at him with immeasurable scorn from his pumps

the reverse!" With anc
had better fortune, but
floor, she turned to her
raising her white shoulders
quite audible to her wretch
you pity me!" Still the mi
with the cold fingered be
indeed say much in the wa
versation; after a painful
perspiration in mortal agony
his forehead, and agitation
knee joints, he only ventured
"could swim?" to which sh
sir," in a tone effectually to
tion, never to be renewed ag

Meanwhile the elder

the solo on the bagpipes, the fearful din of which was making the very windows tremble—"I hope," said the lady, that the noise of my watch does not disturb you—it ticks so very loud."

The lady immediately addressed, replied that so far from being disturbed by it, she did not hear it at all—upon which the other began winding it up, a process she performed several times during the evening.

Another lady changed the subject to that of precious stones, and forthwith gloves were taken off, and they began to examine each other's rings.

"It's a real di'mond, Mrs. Aiken—put it to your tongue."

"You bought it for a di'mond, Mrs. Philter, but excuse me—"

"Oh dear! there is no doubt. The man that mends our windows says it would cut glass."

jewellers are such sad c
people who have only b
of late years. What st
little watch seal, Mrs. Pip

"It's a Brazil topaz," s
it up, "it came from the B
I think, is mentioned in h
the fair possessor of the jew

"Like enough, and it n
seen there than anywhere
Now this is a ring that cos
and a broken sugar ton
emerald!"

"Bottle glass, as I'm a li
exclaimed Mrs. Piper. "
Aikin, you were once take
a ring

better test of the coldness of stone, than their tongues, although, God knows, they use them enough to keep them warm."

"*I* am really sorry to hear, Mrs. Aikin," replied her friend, "that your brother, the half pay lieutenant is so much given to *his* bottle. I am grieved to hear he is never a day sober."

"It's a small family, Mrs. Piper," replied the other, who was a highland lady of great spirit, so much so, that she had once boxed the ears of a little surgeon, who had attempted to extract one of her teeth, and who afterwards prosecuted her for an assault, and recovered damages—"it is a small family that cannot spare one of its members to go astray: but what should we say, Mrs. Piper, of a family, in which father, and mother (in Mrs. Piper's family the love of ardent spirits was said to be hereditary), sons, and daughters — yes, *daughters*, Mrs. Piper, are all of a convivial turn—yes, and some of

to make cu
Mrs. Piper. I think
tenants that ever lived
as ladies—oh dear yes,
But then we are all
course we ought to say,
do them!"

While this amiable conv
on among the dowagers, fli
ceeding apace with the young
assembly—the music sounde
covered with dancers, and t
The flush of rich blood bri
cheek, and nature, stung wi
pulses, snapped the small gall
narrow-minded life, and here a
in the free joyousness

—many a softly moulded form moved there in the natural grace which courts do but copy from; nor was the light hair, the brent brow, the quick, blue eye, and the light step of the highland girl wanting, to perfect groups which a painter would have treasured in his memory, and taxed his art to give their impression again.

And now it is high time to tell what was going on in another part of the inn. Soon after the ball had commenced, the mail coach arrived. At any other time the guard's horn, and the candle light in the post office window, would have attracted general interest, but this night they failed to do so. The postmaster smoked a cigar as he sorted the letters, and the letter carrier opened a journal, and read the London news.

Two gentlemen alighted from the coach, and after being provided with bed-rooms, in which they had their luggage placed—one of them indeed having nothing in this way but a new

travellers room, have
a private apartment. A
kind of meat used for
followed by an unusual
and small pastry, was soon
of bad attendance, and th
and dancing over head; afte
their chairs nearer the fire
tolerable port between them.

"We have now," said the
"experienced a full share, [fo
miseries of life. First, we
escaped shipwreck, then we h
the extreme north, suffering
fatigue, during all of which
an unusual degree of private
For my own part I --

"and if they have gone farther north, we shall have no difficulty in finding them."

"As God liveth!" exclaimed his companion passionately, "I will go no farther north—I am not Captain Parry—I don't want to discover the North Pole—I don't care half-a-crown if it should be found in the Straits of Madagascar—I want to go to London again—I am not a missionary either, and I tell you once for all, I will go no farther beyond the confines of civilization—I have no business to be here at all."

Walter Osborne—for the travellers were he and Mr. Burton—did not say now as he had often said before, on similar occasions—"you may go if you choose, you have my purse at your command," for Pontius never could summon resolution to do this, his habitual procrastination, and a secret liking which he had conceived for his companion, always prevented any such decided step; and Walter now, instead of saying any thing further in the matter, con-

By and by several gentlemen v
faces came in from the ball room, sin

" Grog is the sailor's sheet anchor!'

and having ordered whisky-and-water
in groups about the tables.

" Now between you and me," said
tleman to his friend, in a whisper so
as to be perfectly audible to Mr. Bu
would marry Miss Davidson, if I th
had nothing artificial about her—b
she pads—yes, I *do* think she pads."

" Old Davidson left good prop
marked the other.

" In confidence—mind this is in co
said the lover, " Mrs. Davidson has

"And what was that?" enquired his friend.

The other mentioned something in a hollow whisper—

"That's nothing—nothing!"

"To you or me, I grant you, but to the patient—whew!"

"It is bad—I understand—but it doesn't kill—it never kills."

"Well then there's another thing—she drinks bitters of a morning."

"That's better."

"Her liver is affected."

"You are a happy man!"

"I don't know that—you see there's the padding."

"Oh, Lord, there's nothing in that—they all pad."

"But not to such a degree. Although to be sure if nature alone made up such a shape, it would get into Medical books."

"So it would. Rely upon it there is enough below for the anatomists."

…n, I see, it's the mind
know, she understands French
" That's a comfort—a great
" So it is—and whatever s
may be in, Miss Davidson is
health."
" She has a very free perspir
her lover pensively.
" But are you sure she loves
" In fact too much so."
" Let's drink her health."
" Miss Davidson!" said her lo
bless her!"
" Miss Davidson!" said the
give you joy."
" Thank ye. Shall we join
what do you say to a leg of

something of the same kind of interest as a person out of humour listens to the ticking of a clock, threw himself back in his chair, and taking up an old, London newspaper, had the satisfaction of seeing himself advertised for, with a no very flattering discription of his personal appearance, with an obscure hint, that the bottom of the Thames, near some of the bridges, was perhaps the most likely place at which enquiries could be made.

Peevish and irritated more than ever, he turned to Walter, who was sitting in a brown study, burning his boot heel on the top bar of the grate, and muttering something about the pleasure of travelling with such a cheerful companion, bade him good night, and abruptly went to bed.

But here a new annoyance waited him. It had happened that the bed rooms first allotted to the ladies to revise their toilets in, had been by no means large enough, and the chambermaid, who did not know that Pontius' room

... gentleman entered
found his bed covered with cl
shawls. In too ill humour to
planation of the matter, he toc
a heap, and threw them into th
they were found about half an
by one of the waiters, who gat
and put them in a place of safet

The fatigues of travel made F
spite of the noises of the ball
morning a number of ladies c
bouncing into his room. Mirro
at first—remarks regarding the
buzzing about, and the stray m
metropolitan press, who was d
convivial meeting, and even far
tinctly heard the ...

was going down, for positively the last time. Bolting up in horror and alarm, he was about to rush, as he thought, on deck, when another shriek to which the first was quietness, made him open his dizzy eyes wide enough to see the glancing of white dresses flying from the room, and to perceive that he was on terra firma. With the absence of panic, came indignation at the intrusion, so going to his door, bolting it, and placing a chest of drawers against it, he went to bed again; and after a few petulant tossings, was soon dreaming that he was lying powerless in the grasp of Johnathan Wyld, Mr. Unicorn's bear.

CHAPTER IX.

How the Grave-digger entertained a lady.

Mr. Simeon Delvin, grave-digger and
of the parish ef Skerryton, lived in a lo
tage on the side of a dreary common, of
derable extent, but of no use to anyl
except indeed to the attorneys, to wh

least, actions of trespass raised against the delinquent by all the rival claimants at once, made peaceable people avoid putting their feet on it, as they would inserting them among the intricacies of some dangerous machinery. If a schoolboy's kite broke its string and fell there, he regarded it as fallen into the sea—if a stray cow ventured on it, nobody would own the animal, and it would be suffered to die of starvation on the streets; even the attorneys themselves looked over it with telescopes; no living creature was to be seen there, except now and then a misanthropic raven, or a white owl from the old belfry in the church-yard, perching on some knoll top, when night was setting in.

On the side of this common was the Grave-digger's house, with a small cabbage garden behind it; having a strong gibbet erected in the centre, on which was a dead crow suspended by the neck, as a wholesome warning to its pilfering race. The site commanded an extensive view of the common, cheerfully bounded by

...one with the ominous wo
large letters on the top; this p
architecture having been erect
of this county, over the grave o
found strangled on the comm
derer had never been known—
a muddy, stealthy, hollow s
loathed even by ducks, on the
were one or two weather-beat
naked grave-marks of places wh
been interred; and beyond all th
found relief on a forbidding e
black rocks, where many a st
been wrecked, and many a poo
clinging to their slimy sides,
vain cry.

It ...

with tufted furze, which, tradition said, had been raised over pits in which the dead, and even the quick, had been buried together at the time of the plague; on the common, numerous old women, reputed witches, had been burned alive in wise King James's time; and on the road side, a rude cross of moss-covered stone still stood, to mark the place where a priest had been slaughtered at noon day. And to add to this, what, indeed, it is hardly necessary to add, the whole region was said to be haunted; and in one sense this was true, if understood to apply to the minds rather than the persons of those who passed it; for a more ghastly scene to such as knew its relations was hardly to be found—it was one of those wretched places that give one a distaste for existence, and, at the same time, a shrinking horror of death—a chilling, blighting aspect, which the very instincts of humanity loathe.

And now night had fallen upon the scene.

ing like a strong man suffering— ther
little or no wind, it seemed as if th
kind of gangrene on the atmosphere—
were sodden and bleak, the long val
and dim, and the grey mountains wei
with a misty vapour in rolling masse
peaks. But after sunset, the wind an
risen angrily together, the cold hac
piercing, and the darkness was unb
moon or star. The twinkling lamps
town glimmered over the moving
winking cottage lights shone here anc
the darkness, but fitfully, as if they
stirred by the wind—the noise of the
broke against the rocks, rose in the
hollow and sad—now and then the ps

died away among the hills, in whooping cadences, like the echoes of a shriek.

One light, and one alone, glimmered on the edge of the common; it came from the Grave-digger's solitary house; and there he was, in a strangely furnished room, in an old, round elbow chair, which in its youth had probably been wont to sustain the weight of some stark gentleman of blood in old Scotland's iron days. On the mantlepiece were various coffin ornaments of rusty silver plate; pasted against the wall was the illustrated ballad of "Death and the Lady," and on the round, oak table lay a black leather bible, with brass clasps, the smoking lamp flame shining on the fly-leaf, on which was written in a clear stiff hand:—

"Simeon Delvin his book,
The grace of God upon him Look,
If this Book should be a missing
Send it Back with God's blessing."

And under that in the same hand,

And Pleasant habitation.
When I am Dead and in my grave,
And all my Bones are rotten,
Take up this Book and read my name,
When I am quite forgotten."

A dais, or long, wooden seat, occu
side of the room, above which was fe
black rope with soiled white cambric r
ends, and from this hung bags of gard
a cracked looking-glass, and a wooden
salt.

But the Grave-digger was not alon
distant corner the cripple, formerly m
sat rocking himself in his chair, and b
covered, shewed that his head was bal
now looked distressingly out of harm
his worsted petticoat; while opposite th

and small tumblers, half filled with whiskey-punch, while a snorting kettle on the turf fire sent out steam at their very knees. The cripple, too, had his hot tumbler of the same national drink, which he caressed between his knees, while he helped himself to snuff from a tin box, with a shovel of white bone, nearly as large as an egg spoon. Little did they care for the storm without—old Simeon, although by no means of a convivial turn, yet seemed to give himself up to the hilarity of the hour, taking care however to keep his line of vision out of the bottle's way, the sinking spirits in which might otherwise have unpleasantly affected his own. Once or twice, when his eyes had accidentally fallen on it, he snapped his strong fingers desperately, and cried—"Begone dull care!" while the crone, settling down into an easy stoop before the fire, spread her thin hands to its glow, her features relaxing into abiding twitches, and her tongue into comfortable garrulity, under the influence of

the reputation of being—got up then a sort of sucking whistle, whi strained into imitations of snatche organ tunes.

"Weel, weel, Eppie," said the gr to his female guest, whose gloomy was to make grave clothes, and perf offices for the dead—"when a' is c balls are fine things in a' weathers, i ing on the decline. Mony a we job has been brought to baith our hai like vanities as balls."

"Ay, and that's true," said th sipping her glass, "but times are sa Simeon. There's a great depressio business, as weel as in that o' everyl

mies, the French—it's thae blackguard foriners that mak their dead claes—naething is left for native talent. It's my mind, Simeon, we hae great need o' a red het war, to gar the gentles dee at hame, and do good to the country."

"Come, ye auld randy, I'll gie ye a toast—Success to Epidemies!"

"If it be God's will," responded the crone, "for without that, it wad hardly be a lawfu' toast; and I hae a lang way to gae hame—Heeven and earth! how the wind blaws!"

"Let it blaw there—stane wa's are no' things that bend, and it may roar itsel' hoarse if it likes. Is auld Mrs. Delahay thought to be losin' her grip' yet?"

"Not a finger o' it," said the other, "she'll keep through this winter yet."

"I look it for naething better at her hands," said the sexton, "when aince an auld woman

I've nae patience wi' that hi
the shroud maker—" it's a twalm
since Doctor Porteous said she w
as dead."

" Ay ay, Elspeth, ay ay; but yo
the wrang sex for forcing."

" Gae' wa' wi' your banter!" said
" she likes her siller ower weel to
on drogs, and it's my mind it's *that*
her sae long aboon grun'. But is't
Saunders Murdoch has gotten a n
on his tombstane?"

" As true as that he's buried, and
wi' my ain hands."

" I helpit ye, ye ken," said the lun

" Ay, and ran awa in the mi
to follow a barrel organ," said the

"A marble slab!" exclaimed the crone, "the vaunty body! His shroud was made of imitation cambric. This cap I hae on my head is out o' what I saved, for the crettur had an uncommon sma' face. A white marble—no, dinna be my death wi' laughin'—its grey marble?"

"White, as I'm a sinfu' man, although a sexton; white marble, and a coat o' arms on 't."

"I dinna ken what ye mean by a coat o' arms," said the other, "but I ken I hae often seen *his* coat out at the elbows. Aweel, Simeon, and is't true that Malcolm Whinstrae is to have a gran' tomb, wi' 'esquire' upon't."

"Ay ay, Eppie, it's a' true. The masons were in the kirkyard this very day."

"And he broke, ye ken, and only paid ten shillings in the pound. God hae a care o' us! what will this warl' come to."

"Never min' the warl', it will last our

" And Simeon, ye are sair
that gentleman at the gran' co
ga'en the town a scornfu' blow,
gang to the ball."

" He's a braw chiel'," said t
—" five feet ten in his stockin
least."

" He would mak' a bonny
crone professionally.

" The diel is in the wife!
Elspeth!" (poking the old lady i

" Keep your fingers to yourse
hands ye ken is fair play."

" By my saul, Eppie, ye ough
for sic sma' favours, instead o' t
nose at them. But it's like yc

me for a blessin'," said the lady, removing her chair.

"A blessin'! Gae 'wa ye randy! it's only daft folk that seek for labsters on ploughed land. Your bonny sex have nae blessin's that they dinna need for than ain accasions."

"Aweel, Simeon, God kens the he'rt. There hae been some folk in their youth sae fond o' rovin'—sucking honey like the busy bee, frae lip to lip, that they get blinded wi' sweets, and marry—but let the dead rest!"

"I married aince it's true," said the sexton, "but we've a' been fools in our youth—yet that's an indiscretion naebody can lay to your charge, dawtie."

"It was my ain fault then," said the lady sharply. "It's true naebody ever exactly dee'd for me, but it's well ken't that ae lad took his bed for me, and was very near dead."

"Near dead, never helped the kirkyard,"

Simeon Delvin," said the other, " y
ower wise for me."

" And if ye were never wise in
else, Eppie, ye were aye wise enoug
ain conceit—and God kens ye had e
there."

" I was aye a prudent woman, Si
vin."

" Things are safe that are little so
Eppie—"

" Sought after!" said the old la
nantly. " I could tell the day tha
Delvin—"

" Weel, weel, weel, Eppie, m
woman, dinna let us flyte about
days."

the town drummer, mony a time bring his drum in the silence o' the night—particularly when he had a drap in his head—and beat the points o' war under my window alarming every body in the town, particularly the volunteers—and was na there lang Willy Steenson, the mason lad, although he's a grand-father now, mair's the pity, and God help the wicked! then was na there yoursel', Simeon Delvin—"

"Weel, weel, weel, Eppie."

"Ay, but it's nae weel, Simeon Delvin, it's far frae weel, and let me just tell you that. It's weel ken't ye're a deadly man. Sought after! night and day was I sought after—mony a valentine has come to my door—mony an aching heart hae I given in my time, and though I dress the dead, I was born to better things. I'm a decayed gentlewoman—better born than mony a ane that carries a higher head."

"There's nae mony carries a louder tongue, Eppie, and I was sairly left to mysel' when

reproachfully, " it ill beseems you to s
way to an orphan !"

" Fill up your glass, and think :
o' it."

" Not another drap," said the lady,
gotten to my head already. Na, na,
it's not by punch which perisheth,
can atone for what ye have said to
night."

" Oh, I see ! there's something in
—weel and what's this now, Eppie wo

" Simeon, we are auld friends."

" Weel, and what's comin' now ?"

" Na o' great matter, Simeon,"
crone. " I hae gotten a bit scrap o'
here, frae a young lad that's living at

body now daure approach the house, sin' the Baillie has been there—they say he sends that pagan o' a Frenchman, a' the way to the county town for his letters, for the post office o' Skeryton is no good enough for them. Now the waiter o' the Romantic Thistle tel't this new comer o' me, and that I had some influence with you, and you wi' the English gentleman, so the lang and short o' the matter, Simeon, is this, that I hae been feed to get you to put this letter into the Englisher's hands, without ony body seeing or hearing o' it; and it was for this and naething ither, that I cam' here this night."

"And that's nae a business that I care to mak' or meddle wi'," said the other, "it may be a quarrel for a' that you or I ken—and I as sexton o' the parish, should be an ensample to the flock, rather than a stirrer up o' strife. I maun leave that the women, and heaven kens they hae sma' need o' help there."

"Now ye'll do nae sic thing, Simeon," said

could answer—I see relentin in the
e'e. We're auld friends, Simeon, a
tried my patience sair this night, ai
ain house--a thing I thought I sh
live to see."

"Aweel, Eppie, I wash my hands
sequences, min' that."

"I hae gotten the fee, and will ta
sponsibility," said the crone.

"Without ony body seeing 't!
Eppie, there is nae banes braking, or
business in this letter."

"Think na sic a thought. Besid
if mischief should happen, every thir
kin' gies us an honest penny—except
But dinna look glum at that, I hae
o' that kin'. You'll ...

done—altho' to nae body but yoursel', would I tax my conscience sae far."

The lady declared that her mind was so much relieved at this, that she would just take half a glass more of the spirits-and-water to keep out the cold on her way home, and after she had finished that, and had some further professional conversation with the sexton, she rose to depart.

"Are ye ga'en then?" he demanded.

"And I think it's time, Simeon. It does na consort wi' good manners, for a single woman to keep late hours, in the house o' a single man."

"Aweel, Eppie, I suppose it maun be as ye say. Hector, (addressing the cripple) your mither will be thinking ye hae been spirited and by some leddy o' fortune. Get the lantren ready, and bear Elspeth company, for it is an awfu' night."

And so it was, for as the door was opened, the wind carried small rain, chillness and rushing sounds into the house, and the howls

donned his wig and bonnet, and
lantern, and the grave-digger, bid
good night, shut and bolted the door

CHAPTER X.

Of the meeting between Sir Edmund Arden, and Walter Osborne, and what the consequence was.

It was with feelings difficult to describe, that Walter and Sir Edmund Arden met on the following day, in a coldly furnished fireless room in the Romantic Thistle. Their greeting courtesies were short and restrained, and after both were seated, a moment or two of silence succeeded. Walter was pale, but his eye was bright and excited, Sir Edmund was polite and easy, yet a careless observer might have seen

...ter was the firs

" I received your lette

he, " and you see I have

urgent nature of your

ask, what it is which give

renewing our slight acqua

earnest way."

" Sir Edmund," said the

to conceal an agitation, whi

almost unmanned him, " yo

can answer that question as

" My conscience Mr. C

baronet, " like that I belie

people, has quite enough to

concerns, to have much leisu

on matters of enquiry, wh

are the business of ...

"The world gives you credit Sir Edmund for a sharp wit," said Walter, "and I have no wish to protract our interview, by putting its merits to the test. There is a lady living with you in this neighbourhood, who is said to be your wife."

"Well, sir, and what of that? Many idle things I dare say are said of me, in this small town."

"This much," said the other warmly, "that as she is not, and cannot be so, it is fit that she should know who you are, and the true nature of the odious relation in which she stands to you."

Sir Edmund looked much surprised at this remark, but an expression of intelligence immediately succeeded.

"Well, sir," said he, "and if I should think that it is not expedient to trouble any lady of my acquaintance, with this flattering opinion of yours."

"And I should think it so necessary that I

And your right to do all this?"

"Speak not of my right," said the
sionately, "while your own is villany

"Is your object to quarrel with
said the baronet coldly, "because if it
save you any injurious effects of ove
ment—I never fight duels—and if y
any insult to offer me, you can sen
letter."

"Sir Edmund, Sir Edmund, this
will not serve you now. I have hear
that you are a man who laughs at such
and I remember at Montpelier, wh
having poisoned the happiness of a for
rank, you braved the opinion of all h
men by—but that is not the question n

"I have [illegible]

number of years. I have a correct knowledge of my rental too, and find that under any probable change of protecting laws, if I manage to keep out of debt, the natural agricultural value of my estate will be sufficient to provide me with all the solid comforts of life; and as I have the happiness of having been born in a country where there is an excellent police, I do not at all see any rational necessity for putting myself in jeopardy of death, disfigurement, or acute bodily pain, by fighting with pistols for a redress of grievances, when wiser means lie so ready at hand."

"Nor for answering such demands on you—I know it well. Having borne the odium you have sustained, it would be folly to think otherwise."

"I have sustained, my good friend, much less than the kind sympathies of the world give me credit for. But as to responding to such appeals, I, in the first place, endeavour to avoid them, and when they *do* come, as they

above them, and gratify my ener
warding them to the nearest may
act of natural politeness which has
me a popularity, by no means of a
kind."

"I know it, I know it," said th
patiently—"I know that you ha
the ordinary means of arbitrimen
which most men reckon the awardin
indifferent things—I know that to
you in terms that would be just, w
be worthless. I shall not use them
will say that you are a highly ac
gentleman—a most successful desp
that the ignorant world terms the de
life, and the attributes of honour
But I must tell

in a voice almost choking with emotion, "is not your wife, Sir Edmund?"

"No," said the baronet coolly, "if you mean Miss Brandon by that curious term, she certainly is not. The lady who stands in that endearing relation to me is, thank God, in a dying state somewhere in the south of Europe, and until I am relieved from the present Lady Arden, it would of course be folly to think of having another."

"All this I have heard, and it only confirms what hardly required confirmation—that Miss Brandon has been shamefully, cruelly, foully deceived."

"Well, sir, and suppose that I say that your charge is too absurd to refute."

"Then," exclaimed the other fiercely, "I hold you for—"

"Stop!" interrupted the baronet, in a voice that formed a strange contrast to the tone in which he had hitherto spoken, and which also showed that his coolness of demeanour was

peet of the man changed to a gl
accorded with the character whic
phy made, himself at least, rega
degree of respect—" if your obje
den your imagination with offe
our interview is at an end. You
sir, if you fancy that there is
clause in my creed to give me im
these. Nay, hear me, my ardent
the industry which you must ha
to find me out here is of a mos
kind, and had it been better emp
have done you some essential se
even curious to see what good
from it, and as I have walked u
mile in this wretched weather to
should be sorry to leave you ab

coat, and this sleet shower seems to have set in heavily."

It was with an ill-concealed effort of patience that Walter listened and submitted to this, but the constrained pause thus afforded, served to render him sensible of the necessity of curbing the passions which agitated him, and although burning with indignation, he had sufficient controul over himself to resolve to refrain from anything which might put a self-created obstacle between the object which engrossed his thoughts. The other also, as he replaced his watch in his pocket, had relapsed into his former air of nonchalance.

"You are a wise man, Sir Edmund, if the world says truly," resumed Walter, "and your understanding requires no assistance to be convinced that I have not made this journey for purpose of idle railing, or of endeavouring to recal *you* to a sense of what is right."

"Exactly my own opinion," said the baronet. "Indeed I should have thought that your expe-

own reward."

"It is well, Sir Edmund—but our present business. This lady w the victim of your accursed profliga am in no mood to measure terms—I mined, should I have to fight my v presence, (Sir Edmund evidently this), to acquaint with the ignominio in which she stands to you; unle once, ruined as she now is, surrender friends."

"Say rather to Mr. Walter Osborn the other in a tone of irony. "S make a fair post-chaise companion, might travel by such easy stages as wo an opportunity of drying her tears."

desperate cause, you will avoid remarks like these."

"And why should I avoid them, sir? If the patience of each other be the measure of the length of this interview, on my part, at least, it is already at an end."

"But on mine, it is not so," answered the other. "We are here man to man, and may make demands as we shall sustain them."

"That is very true, we are here together, and as it is the inherent right of every Englishman to make a fool of himself, there can of course be no exception in your case."

"It is the natural right of every man to do his best to get redress for injury," answered the other with increasing excitement, "and the means of doing so, have been given him, if he has the determination to employ them. This is no time to speak of rights, but to employ the power we have to support them."

"All this is very neatly expressed, although the tone, I confess, is a little too piquant for

...ow what you
obliged by your doing so.'

"What I desire, what
swered Walter, in a voic
intensity of passion in i
"that here!—now! where
me a writing, acknowledgin
of marriage, false as it wa
don supposed herself your
happy lady has been you
witting partizan of odious
this, and her real conditio
she shall then have freedom
course. Give me this, or—'

"Well, and what then
Edmund coldly.

"Then!" exclaimed A

jured me cruelly, foully—and another more fiendishly than me. Do you think that men's arms sleep when they hear of such acts as yours? Do you think that having got you at last, I am to suffer you to depart with my demands unanswered—to pass from this room with an iron sneer on your lip, to enjoy further vantage of your crime? No, Sir Edmund, no!"

The baronet now, for the first time, looked uneasy. And well he might, for the passion of man, when fairly stirred, has more fellness than that of the most savage nature our instincts shrink from, and there was something in the thirsty eyes that glowed on him—something in the rigid features—in the hard clear tones of the voice in which he was addressed, which made him see that he had heedlessly tampered with one whom it might be dangerous to exasperate further. Meantime Walter had locked the door.

"Once more I ask you, Sir Edmund," he

you?

"I have no reply but d
replied the other indignantl

Walter threw open an
case, took out two pistols, o
before Sir Edmund, the oth
cocked.

"Sir Edmund, you are
yourself!"

"This is an attempt to
claimed the baronet, starting

"It is no crime to crus
Walter. "Foul-hearted robb
he burst out, "a grave is op
one other minute, and it wi
grant what I demand. Make
once!"

quired distance, "your delay trifles with both our lives!"

"I will delay no longer then," said Sir Edmund. "My answer is that I regard you as a madman, who has a design upon my life, and the moment you attempt to point that pistol at me I will shoot you where you stand."

"I am answered then, and you are on your guard!" cried Walter fiercely.

"This is no duel," exclaimed Sir Edmund, becoming excited in his turn, "but an attempt at murder. Move your right arm another inch! and you die, so help me God!"

"Then," cried Walter, in a voice that rang in the silent room, "your blood be on your own head!"

At that moment there was a quiet every-day life sort of tap at the door. Slight as the sound was, it did more than the voice of wisdom could have done. It was the waiter come to tell that the carriage was ready—Walter called out calmly to let it wait; but the interruption had for the moment averted

not a whit abated.

" Think for one moment," said
" your letter to me, inviting m
my portfolio—these pistols are
have even ordered a carriage to
quietly—had I shot you, no jur
believed that I did not do it i
fence; while had I been the
would the case have stood with
glad for my own sake neither o
have occurred, for I assure you
came out this morning, I had not
idea of being assassinated, and ha
in self defence, I should have bee
embarrassed by it."

" This trifling is ill timed,"

before me so, with a smooth brow, and villain's heart, when death may be so near us both? Do you think that *now* I shall be balked? that after robbing me of all the happiness I hoped for in existence, I have brought you here to listen to ribbald threats which only madness can make me execute? Grant then, I am mad, and you are wise, Sir Edmund, you are very wise—but this pistol is carefully loaded, and one touch of the madman's finger will send the wise man, with his pernicious wisdom coffined with him, from the world. But we waste words—once more, and for the last time, I call on you to make your choice."

"You labour under a hideous mistake," answered the other, "a foolish newspaper story long since contradicted and laughed at, has disturbed your reason."

"Do not trifle longer in the name of God!"

"It is impossible to grant what you de-

"Give me what I a
again, "or, let a marriag
the church, and then on
being in a condition to repe
a way to do an act of ta
victim, I shall need no su
enforce it. The clergyman
and the clerk an imbecile
riage in this country can
where—let it be in the cler
Monday evening, and I will
other to witness it. Give m
ing your bans to be proclai
the parish church—or if you
such a secret to my honour, g
acknowledging this damn

There was no mistake at all; and Sir Edmund saw that he must either fight a desperate duel with the almost certainty of death to both —or give what was demanded of him. It was evident he was ill at ease, but it was no time to tamper longer, and although secretly exasperated, he put down the pistol he held, and said he would give the writing Walter required.

He then wrote out an order to have the bans proclaimed next day; and permitted Walter to name the hour, seven in the evening on the day after, when he would attend at the Manse, as the clergyman parish house is called in Scotland—where the ceremony might be administered. All this he now did, only stipulating that if he should send Walter a note from Miss Brandon herself, expressive of her knowledge of Sir Edmund's marriage, her contentment with her present position, and her determination to decline the interference of her friends, the whole affair should drop, and that Walter



...ns he readily agreed
so arranged, the negoci...
their stormy conference, ...
themselves of each other.

CHAPTER XI

How new misfortunes befel Walter Osborne of a serious kind.

THERE is no feeling of the mind so fantastic as selfishness. It has been said indeed that it forms the master element of every motive, an apothegmn which strips glory of her crown, changes the warm picturing of the heart's poetry, to a matter canvass and paint, and resolves much of virtue itself into a question of arithmetic. It has been refuted too, it is said,

[redacted] moon which strip
foliage and bloom—a phi
the rose to learn what it
teaches knowledge from a
still it is there, a piercing
actions, mocking self-love
mirror, and stripping from
that dazzled the eyes of
motives of love, even that
nobleness a boast, and patri
thing. All that city of brig
our imaginations dwell, and
offers up its homage to the
charms in emblazoned record
the minstrel's song; all
crumbles to the sand befo
trover: two

withering apothegm passes like the shadow on a rock—self-dignity, and social benefit are found to be the same, and our duty to ourselves is charity to our neighbour; while the other rises fair in the pure sunshine of heaven, and paradise is written on it, to cheer worldly foolishness on its way, and comfound bright eyed glory in its narrow reckonings.

When the stupor which for a time succeeded Walter's interview with Sir Edmund Arden, had passed so far to release his mind to reflection, the sensations were unhappy ones. First, there was that sterile feeling which sometimes suceeds a devoted struggle for another, for which we may neither receive gratitude, nor good men's praise. And then his heart almost secretly told him that it might have been more grateful to it to have rescued Katherine Brandon from the spoiler—to have seen her unhappy passion turned to indignant hate, and perhaps also to have seen gratitude to himself blend into another feeling, which, although worthless

too lately known; cherishin
a sad widowhood a memor
and his love—such unack
lurked in his mind, althou
merit the name of thoughts.
a nature to cherish them lo
regret which for a time damp
that any state of things w
ignominy from her lot, alth
prive him of the poor comn
thought of hers—was the bes
ished from his mind as rapidly

Yet something abided more
this. There was infamy althc
—infamy although unknown
and he felt that the contrac

wiped away; and to the nobler class of minds this is a thought more chilling in the case of others, than their own. Neither the shame nor guilt could be made worse, by pausing until time's current should reach a remedy. To find a course which spurning a present condition, should still reach such a gaol, he felt to be impossible; in the first place there was the ardent will, or passionate agony of a woman, who his reason told him would see no mid-way between guilt and death; and in the second, there was a man whose coolness was but a bridle put on reckless passions, and which fitted them uneasily. He could not help believing he saw something even of the magnanimity of guilt, in the hazard which this bad man had consented to incur; and it flashed painfully across his mind, that such a person with all his crimes might have qualities of heart, which would make a woman's honour tremble in the balance, ere it would reject the bosom on which she had relied.

He was roused from his reverie by the

having been
previous days at the count
had gone to wait for lett
which he had at a ventur
directed to be sent to him th

"No letters for me," sa
down with an earnestness
made the chair creak, "no
morrow I suppose we are to g
the mountains?"

"No, no, I have found the

"I give her hearty thanks t
no farther north!" exclaime
"Now if I might be infor
you intend to remain here, I s
worst."

"I think it probably [illegible]

should find ourselves in jail one of these days!"

"You are wrong again, but let me beg you will ask no questions as to what has passed, or is to be done. I give you my word there is to be no duel—and I am in honour bound to secresy."

"I am glad you are bound no further north," said Pontius. "I saw by a pile of London papers that this elopement business, which has brought me here, is now forgotten, some of the journals having affirmed that the story was untrue, as the worst part of it rests on no foundation whatever."

"Do they?" said Walter coldly.

"I am ruined root and branch!' rejoined Mr. Burton. "They must now have got somebody else in my place, and there is no letter, no request that I should return to duties of any kind. How very soon a man is forgotten in London!"

he has not had credit ei
behind him. This is a v
upon my word."

"It is indeed," assented

"It is mortgaged to th
instance," remarked Pontiu
reflective mood, "and is l
rupt concern altogether. T
not living, it is existing, and
ence it is."

"That is a truth we do r
long to know."

"At our first entry int
Mr. Burton, "we get c
produces nausea and pain
before we are a quarter

say there are easy modes of death — but it is a bitter truth that there are no easy ways of living. There is a vast field lying unbroken for philosophers, in the annals of suicide."

"I once thought," said his companion, "that the crime you speak of was a hideous blot on human reason, a vampire phantasy of a diseased mind—a thing which only madness in its most phrenzied moments could contemplate. I think less harshly of it now."

"Suicide is the gloomiest mystery of reason's godhead," remarked Pontius—"the subtlest but the most bitter distinction which separates us from the brutes. The grandeur of our nature can be seen even in its ruins. Those who have died by their own hands have no doubt at one time wondered at the act in others. But there they lie before our eyes—as I have often seen them—with their self-inflicted wounds, mocking themselves and us—"

"Have you often seen them?" demanded

Walter, with an interest which the question hardly seemed to require.

"Seen them! aye a hundred times. Make the amount witnesses against life, and find a like number among living men who will tell you that life is pleasure to them. Seen them! Is there a morning that does not bring many of such chronicles to the rich man's breakfast table? Yes, I have in my time seen at least a hundred suicides—young and old, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, beautiful and blasted of nature's charms—lying dead by their own hands. There is no need to tell of the purple forehead, the gashed wounds, or the shattered head—no need to speak of the mute, soiled objects around them—they died by their own hands. And if what they possessed, be regarded as such things severally are in life, as the first of blessings—youth, beauty, and the love of those they loved — wealth, power, a proud name and the honours of the world—take any single blessing which you

esteem the best, and I have known its possessor fly from it—to death. The heart knows its own bitterness, but God only knows the bitterness of our common lot."

"Life indeed presents a dismal picture under such colouring as this," observed Walter, "and yet we find the myriads struggle through it."

"Men walk the streets with ulcers at their vitals," said Pontius, who had worked himself up to a most gloomy state of mind, "and some will stagger on a few paces, even when death's shaft is planted in them—but the end is the same. Man's glory is his curse—and the precedence which does not lead to immortality, the very brutes can take the boast from. Were there no world but this—but I am going too far now. God help us all. Pull the bell—put up those d——d pistols, and let us have something to drink. The brandy I drank on the road was counterfeit."

As Walter had expected the day passed, and

As Walter had expected the day passed, and the next, which was Sunday, without any letter from Sir Edmund Arden. Arrangements were made as Walter had determined; the parish clerk, an old man who could sing in a quavering voice, but from the absence of teeth could not speak intelligibly, mumbled over the bans for "the first, second, and third time," as he said, in a breath; this favor being procured by the usual payment of an extra fee; and Walter had visited the minister, who promised to perform the ceremony in the Manse at the appointed hour. But on Monday afternoon to his surprise and consternation, he received a polite note from Sir Edmund, enclosing the threatened document from Katherine, which made all these preparations useless.

It was some hours after sunset, when the Rev. Michael Armstrong, and the gallant Lieutenant Mac Lee, R. N. were conversing together over

their third tumbler, in a carelessly arranged room; strewed about with books, fowling pieces, piles of sermons, fishing rods, printed communications from committees of the general assembly, under boxing gloves; and two or three long backed, wiry haired, bandy legged otter hounds, lying in blessed sleep on the rug before a large blazing fire—that Mr Burton ushered himself into the room.

"I am intruding I fear," said Pontius.

"Of course you are," said the divine.

"There can be no doubt of it in any way," added Lieutenant Mac Lee, with drunken gravity. "It comes from *in* and *trudo* to intrude, that is the signification, derivation, and conjugation of the word, parson, eh?"

"Gentlemen both," said Pontius, "if I have intruded, it is against my will. There is a gentleman below—this is his card—(handing Walter's to Mr. Armstrong), who has broken your bell wire, and is cursing every body to the devil at being kept waiting. Your servants

are not to be found, except one, who is too drunk to walk."

"It is a couple to be married," said the clergyman to the lieutenant.

"To be married?" said the other, "and at this hour of the night? Oh, let them wait till to-morrow, and they will think better of it."

"If you don't make haste," said Pontius, "you will have my friend up stairs, and if he comes, as he, I regret to say, has been possessed with a devil since five o'clock, he may do somebody a mischief."

"Well, well, well," said the clergyman peevishly. "I will see him immediately. Mac Lee, you must excuse me for ten minutes or so—perhaps this gentleman will keep your company till I return."

"With much pleasure," said Pontius taking a seat at the table, and giving a professional look to the bottles.

"There is whiskey, rum, and some very old cognac," said the clergyman pushing the bottles

towards Pontius, "we require to use these things now and then, for this house is very cold."

"You will find it hot enough if you don't go down stairs," remarked Pontius.

"The gentleman will be quiet enough after he is married," said the naval officer, as the clergyman left the room.

"So I have heard many married men say," remarked Pontius, filling his tumbler from a small, brass kettle on the table.

"I am not married, thank God," said the lieutenant.

"Neither am I," said Pontius.

"I am very glad to hear it," said the other. "I drink your health, sir."

Pontius returned the compliment, and they both drew their chairs nearer to the fire.

In the middle of a cheerful song concerning the melancholy effects of going to bed sober, in which these two worthies were engaged, the

clergyman re-entered the room, joining the chorus at the door, and rubbing his hands as if glad to have got rid of something troublesome.

"You will not leave us yet," he said, addressing Mr. Burton, "although your friend has refused me the pleasure of his company here."

"Is he gone?" enquired Pontius.

"He is, he is, but that is no reason why you should go. Come, let us have another song," continued Mr. Armstrong, handling the sugar tongs with practised rapidity, as he prepared another tumbler.

"Old King Cole was a merry old soul!"

And so he struck into that historical ballad before Mr. Burton had time to reply. The naval officer did the same, and Pontius himself joined in it a moment or two, saying inwardly that ten minutes or so could make little difference one way or the other, and that if he

walked quickly, he might after all overtake Walter before he reached the inn.

These ten minutes, however, like a spendthrift's promissory note, were so often renewed, that it was considerably past midnight before he reached The Romantic Thistle, and that in a state which had confused his ideas of locality, so far, that on leaving the Manse he had taken the wrong direction, and walked two miles on the road to the highlands, whither indeed he might have proceeded, if he had not been informed of his error by a turnpike keeper, whom he had knocked up to open his gate. He laid much stress upon the delay thus occasioned, and was making other excuses for himself, when the appearance of his companion made him stop short.

Walter was pale, and looked almost haggard in the dull light of the neglected candles. He had suffered the fire to go out, and the appearance of the room was most forlorn and

desolate. An open letter lay on the table near him.

"You are ill," said Pontius hastily.

"I hardly know what I am," answered Walter, "beyond this, that I am ruined."

"That word has lost its meaning," said the other, "since the fair sex took it up. It is an event that happens to every body several times in this life, and to not a few, once or twice a year. Ruin is an old scutcheon over an attorney's door. As Doll Tear Sheet says, it was an excellent good word before it was ill sorted."

"It is rightly sorted here—I have lost the dearest hope of my life."

"So does every body else; it is only the healthy transition from a dream. Hope! I too have had my hopes, and where are they now? Look at this coat, sir—I have worn it three years, and when it is being brushed or mended I appear in a guise that puts my linen to the test."

"Well," said the other, "I see your coat—what of that?"

"A good deal," said his friend, taking the liberty of filling a tumbler from a brandy bottle, and a water decanter on the table. "Do you seriously think that a man with one coat, and that severely darned, a man creeping towards forty years of age, a beggarly nondescript almost ruined in self pride, and the opinion of the world—a man, sir, that has often to think and devise for a dinner like a savage in the wilderness—do you think that such a man as I, thrown like a weed on the muddy waters that crowd round to swallow me, tossing on those damned waves, like a loathed thing on a pelted stream, that I have never known the bitterness of blasted hopes. It is a stilted penury of heart that makes one man say of another, I cannot feel for him, because his misfortunes were of his own creating. Nobody feels for me," continued Pontius, taking a deep draught of the brandy and water.

"I am ruined utterly," said his companion, "in fortune as well as hope. Read that letter, which I found waiting for me on my return."

"What is this!" exclaimed Mr. Burton, "upwards of twenty thousand pounds of Spanish stock sold for a nine hundred pounds matter, and eleven pounds eight shillings and four pence put to your credit!"

"And these eleven pounds are all my fortune now," said Walter.

"Heaven and earth! how comes this?"

"It is a short tale," answered the other. "Sometime ago I wrote this broker to buy ten thousand pounds of Spanish stock for me, when those funds at their low rate, were reckoned a good investment, which would have taken some four or five thousand pounds. It seems by this letter that he understood me to order ten thousand pounds to be invested in these funds, and to make up that amount, I only having nine thousand odd in the English funds, he himself

advanced some eight hundred pounds towards the purchase. Spanish stock has since it seems been falling day after day, and now he has sold mine to pay himself his own advance; and that done, there is only that miserable balance left for me. That is all that now remains, except the few pounds in my purse, of every shilling I possessed in the world."

For a moment or two Mr. Burton continued silent—

"This is a most unhappy affair," he at length observed—"have you no other fortune of any kind?"

"None whatever."

"The first shock of such a calamity is this," observed Pontius evidently distressed at what he had heard—"it is not the worst. Unlike all other losses, that of fortune becomes worse by time. You must stir yourself—you are still young, and the world is before you. There are a hundred proverbs against useless repining, and there is a healthy truth in them

all. I too know what it is for one accustomed to the ease which wealth confers, to have to struggle for daily bread, and with a heavy heart too. The great thing is," added Mr. Burton, pouring out brandy for another glass, "beware of intemperance."

"What am I to do?" said Osborne bitterly.

"Come to London with me, our plight is nearly the same—it was an unlucky day when we left it for this land of prudence and sterility. You have youth which is better than riches—good talents I can see you have; and your education is a possession of which no man can deprive you. We must never lose heart. Courage is a man's credit with himself, and if he loses it there, nobody else will trust him. For a man at your time of life, there is always a world for the winning. Take a little brandy-and-water."

"I shall indeed set out for London to-morrow," said Walter, "but what I am to do there I cannot tell. And yet all I feel now on ac-

count of the loss of fortune, as a trifle compared with what I experience from another cause. I am indeed wretched. Would to God! I could find death without a crime. I am weary of existence. The world to me has nothing now worth living for."

"A truth common to all, but there is another that beards it—the world has nothing worth *dying* for, either. Nay, you must not despond. Look on past sufferings, how different they seem now to what we then considered them, and when you get older, you will be surprised at having felt despondency while youth remained. No, no, let old age in misfortune ask to gather up its bones and die—a thing by the way it never seeks to do—but let not youth wear sackcloth, for what enterprise may regain. I grow wondrous wise to-night. But it is time to go to rest. The mail coach for the south leaves this inn at nine in the morning—let us go to rest now; in sleep, as in death, the happy and unfortunate are alike; and no man

can be said to be thoroughly wretched who sleeps well."

Walter's throbbing forehead, and wearied mind, made him ready to follow this advice; and taking their bed-room candles, the companions separated for the night.

CHAPTER XII.

In which the author takes advantage of the first mild day to bring out a new character.

THE next day was bright and sunny. The sea bird screamed among the cliffs, the waters had a joyous blue, and the sky was deep and clear. The bright waves mantled on the cold rock's base, the passing ship, even in the slowness of the distance, rode on in pastime over the glorious sea; the stone built town glittered, on its bold peninsula, under the dazzling sun, and the

line of coast beyond, was darker and more distinctly marked. The hard air was pure and healthy, over the brown wood, black ploughed field, and the short verdure of the pasture land; every object seemed to have lost its protecting shadows—the stoat peeped from the dry stone wall, the otter floated exposed on the limpid river, the wild deer browsed on the silent hollows, and the hare could be seen on the distant mountain brae. The leaping streamlet had a noticed voice, and the rooks cawed loudly though the sun was high, the deep sweeping stream flew onwards like an arrow, nor had a wrinkle on its surface, for all the gushing sounds it gave. The snow-drop twinkled at the brown pine's base, and the pasture daisy with its furled, pearly leaves stood in the thick grass like a beauty veiled—the mated birds chirped restlessly amid the leafless branches, and the hawk hung soaring, like a dark spot in the sky.

The day was most serene, but there was

winter in it still. White patches of snow remained to checker the mountain tops, which the clouds had risen from—bare they stood there, and their gigantic altitudes softened down by the lofty arching sky—the noon-tide sun was warm, but its course was narrowed, and cold, wintry shadows were ready to rise when it set. The rich beams made the gloomy woods glitter, but there were no opened green leaves to glance them back again; they shot through the pierced vistas glowing and warm, but they slanted the rough trunks idly, and became extinguished where they fell.

The very breezes, although gentle and flickering as those of a summer day, had a sullen coldness in them. They were stealthy and truant, and blew at times with the fitful restlessness which precedes a storm. But no storm was coming on, the white clouds did not move, nor hang in feathery looseness below the azure, but mingled with it till they became dim; streaking the sides of the horizon like the inside

tured abroad, to bouyant energy i
glings, and to the wise man's hear
that all God's works are good.

There was one heart that joined
this. On a garden seat of unbarke
ladies were sitting in a sequestered
the little shrubbery, near the cott
described. The one was Katherin
and the other a person past midd
whose countenance suffering had str
the lines of age. A widow's cap
forehead, and the contour of a fir
countenance more striking; the eye
and bountiful, and the whole aspec
placid benevolence, which while it
reverence, makes the heart feel kind

perhaps that retirement, and an old woman's society, are poor things to have preferred to a ducal coronet. It was a pretty bauble, Kate, to have fled from."

"You do not think so poorly of me," answered the other. "Heaven knows how gladly I availed myself of your protection from a series of persecutions which I long endured patiently. In September I shall be of age, and you will then come and live with me on the estate, which will be my own. For I half think you chose this retreat more in regard to my fears than your own wishes. And yet it seems that I am likely to be pursued even here, for no later than yesterday Sir Edmund required a writing from me saying that I declined the interference of any one—to get rid of a person who had come in quest of me. I am sure I would rather die than go home to suffer again what I endured."

"Who was the person?" demanded the

elderly lady. "It is odd that Edmund told me nothing of this."

"I don't know who it was," answered the other, "but of this I am sure, that no real friend of mine could have come on such a mission."

"Yet I wonder why Edmund concealed it from me; but I dare say his reason was a good one. The world charges him with many vices, but I never could think harshly of him. He was my late husband's favourite nephew, and he looks now what his uncle was. Nothing could be kinder than his attention to us, since the day he brought you to me from Lady Felton's."

"Yes," added the old lady, with whom her late husband's nephew had made himself a favourite, by reason of her riches, she having no children of her own—"Edmund has many excellent qualities, in spite of the vices he has been often charged with, and many of these have arisen from that unhappy matrimonial

connection. How much happier might he have been, had he married such a one as you, Kate?"

Katherine did not know well how to reply to this, but as she was thinking carelessly what answer to make, a sudden gleam of intelligence passed over her beautiful features, succeeded by a blush, deep and burning. Then, as if ashamed at her own thought, whatever it was, she changed the subject, and pointed out some of the most striking beauties of the scene before them.

"They are very magnificent," said the elder lady, "and yet, Kate, I fear they are losing their charms to you. Come now! I must know what makes you look so unhappy at times. Your mother would not have kept her grief secret from me, neither shall you."

"Do I look so?" demanded the beautiful girl.

"You look very unhappy at times, Kate—even Edmund remarks it, and he has a quick eye for detecting changes of countenance."

happy in being with you."

"It is welcome to me to grant still I can see something preys o at times. You refused Edmund with him yesterday, when you saddled, and this morning I caught own room in tears. Either you refusal of a coronet—a thing a wo apt to do—or something else ha the heart-ache. Nay, I must b woman's privelege to guess at it."

Katherine blushed deeply.

"Your heart it may be was n give, when it was sought of you same great man—is it not so? sure it is, I thought at the time th

fusion, "I am not. Had I been so, I should have told you."

"Why, Kate, you are not a girl to love unrequited. Beautiful, and as we old women say, but hardly believe—what is better than beautiful, good, aye as pure and angel-hearted a being as breathes you are, my own proud Kate. Then there is another thing which brings woman more homage than ever virtue won for her yet. You are rich, Kate, as the world goes--you will in September possess in your own unfettered right, an estate of some three thousand a year. Tut tut, you are not a girl to be despised."

"I should hope not," said Kate, with a touch of pride even in the meekness of her answer.

"What is it then? why conceal it from me? Kate, you love some one else. Nay, I do not now ask you to confess it, and deny it I am sure you will not do. I can see that it is so. Yet I must needs know to whom your affections are engaged."

"Do not ask me that," said Katherine.

"It is most fit that I should, and that you should answer me candidly. It cannot be that my proud hearted Kate has bestowed her affections, where it shames her to confess to her adopted mother. If the object is unworthy, you must tear it from your heart—better far better, a few months or even years of suffering, than a whole life of anguish or shame!"

"Shame," repeated Katherine quickly.

"I mean shame for others, pretty one, not for yourself. It is an ennobled error, but a deliberate crime, to allow passion to lead to imprudence, even in the choice of a husband. There is no perversion of reason, God's noblest gift, worse than that—if this person you love is unworthy of you—"

"He is not unworthy of me!" exclaimed Katherine with a passionate warmth which destroyed all reserve. "He is all that the heart and mind of woman can wish for in him

she loves. I have known him from childhood, and loved him before I knew what love was. There is not in the world a worthier or a better than he. He was cruelly used and acted nobly. It was not my fault—I will speak frankly now, that we were not formally engaged. I saw he loved me, saw it in every look and act—he loved me well, but not better than I loved him. I would trust the heart he gave me more than my own. He acted generously by me. He saw my love, but pressed no claim on it. I need not say that this was not welcome to me —but when I read his motives, oh, how I esteemed, loved, venerated him! The world does not contain such a man as he. I am not ashamed to say I love him! He thought more of the chance of birth which separated our condition than I could ever do. I know he deserted competence and ease, for a field of action on which he hoped to gain the honour he had no claim to by birthright, on my account alone. I was wiser than he there, for I saw

him leave me with sorrow, and regretted bitterly that he required the acknowledgments of others, to a merit which I needed no such accessaries to know. Shame! the proudest woman in England would be honoured by his regard. He is the first of men—Tell me if any woman who loves, or has loved with devoted constancy, and she will be found to know something wanting in the object of her attachment, which her love disguises—in him there is nothing of this—every thought of worth, every excellence which girlhood dreams of in him who is to love her, are centred and realized in him. Why should I refuse to acknowledge my attachment to him? I do not do so. I love him with my whole heart!"

The old lady sat back in her seat, and crossing her hands together, remained silent for a moment or two. "And where is he," she demanded at length, "where is this paragon of girlish dreams to be found?"

"That I cannot tell. I heard he left Mad-

rid in bad health about ten months ago. It is nearly three years since we met."

"Poor Kate! You build hopes on a foundation of sand, if you think that man's heart, unfettered by obligations, will remain constant so long; your lover in that time may have been twenty times in love. You judge wrongly of human nature. Tush girl! this love of yours is fitter for the lay of a Troubadour than the realities of life."

"I judge of him by myself," said Katherine thoughtfully.

"A bad test, sweet one. He is young, I warrant it, and boy's love is the subject of a homely proverb, and a true one. Never think that an attachment so loosely formed is one to be trusted. He has forgotten you, Kate—the world has too many allurements for such as he. It is even such thoughts that make you sad at times—is it not so?"

"I have thought more seriously of this, since I came to this place, then I ever did before,"



have forgotten?

"Again perhaps you may be, the importuni pleasing suitor, prese longer than it would h At all events it has b served, and you would from your thoughts. A suitors enough, and as tionate, whoever you lov men, as well as he."

Katherine did not an from under her long, d companion saw that the s pressed it no further then.

Sir Edmund approache plished baronet, sir

it was not his bereavement which disturbed him; on the contrary, no man ever submitted to such a calamity with more complete resignation—it was a private communication from the attorney, whose painful duty it had been to inform him of her sudden death, and as he said, sincerely condole with him on it—that she had, a few days before she died, unexpectedly exercised a forgotten right, which she possessed under the marriage settlement, to alter by will the destination of property to a considerable amount; and that this she had done, in favour of a new society for the cure of rheumatism. Sir Edmund, as yet however, had communicated nothing of these events to any one.

"I have given your servant the portfolio you lent me about a week ago," said he addressing Katherine, "she tells me you have letters to write."

Katherine left them and went into the house. There, in the drawing-room, she found the portfolio waiting her; and as she opened it, a hot

the words "Walter Osborne," w
twenty times. For a moment
feared Sir Edmund knew her secre
flection she saw that this was no
she dismissed the thought. But he

She wrote a short note to Lady I
ing her to get the bank note which
forwarded secretly to Lucy Wrey,
intimation that it was a present fr
who would be unhappy if the gift
refused. She took out a pocket bo
work box, it contained but two banl
of fifty, and the other of twenty p
closed the latter, and sealed the l
rang the bell, but while doing so,
herself for the unequal division whi

not be—I will send her the larger note, and I must manage as I may."

As she made this resolution, Monsieur Auguste Gilbert entered the room in answer to the summons. With brightening eyes he saw her break the seal of the letter, take out the one bank note, and enclosing the other seal up the letter again. She desired him to take it to the post office, he received it with a profound bow, and left the room, silently congratulating himself that she had not taken the number of the "*billet de banc.*"

Monsieur Auguste went down to his own room, seated himself before the fire with a heel on each hob, broke the seal of the letter again, before even the wax was quite crisp; took out the bank note, looked at the amount with evident satisfaction, held it to the light to see the water mark, then coolly put it into his own purse. He next read the letter through —twisted it into a long roll, took out his cigar case, bit off the end of one, and lighted

it with Katherine's letter. He held it blazing smokily in the daylight for a moment or two, quietly puffing his prime Havannah all the time, dropped the scorched remainder of the letter into the fire, waited patiently until it was quite consumed, then took his hat, and went out for a walk towards Skerryton, to ogle the ladies.

CHAPTER XIII.

How Walter Osborne and Pontius Burton returned to London, and the condition in which they found some of their friends.

God help the man, who enters London without money or friends. It is a fair city in the youth's eyes who knows it not, a scene of action for which he pines, as the field on which his brightest hopes are to be attained; as in former days, the young spirit chafed at country quiet, and longed for the throng of blows in which he was to win his spurs of gold—exhilirating

is the thought of distinction in the senate, or even the less dazzling honours of less ambitious minds; as former thoughts were, of leaping the proud horse into the midst of the press of battle, and striking down adversaries with an iron mace—fine things these are all, but God help the man, who enters either conflict without horse or arms. And money is now-a-days the armour of the world. Small store is needed to begin the fight, but it is a sad thing to enter on it a naked man. The arm may be strong, but it will strike idly upon steel; the bosom may be daring, but a coward's shaft will pierce it through.

The mists of London had thickened the twilight, when Walter and Mr. Pontius Burton were still some dozen miles distant, on the cold roof of a stage coach, on the north road. Pontius had fallen asleep; the prospect of returning again to his old haunts, having soothed his spirits, in spite of the uncertain circumstances in which his abrupt withdrawal

from his duties had placed him; but Walter was awake, anxious and unhappy. During the day, when the sun shone, and the fine team pranced along the road, he had been cheerful even to mirth; and the coachman, a smart rosy-faced fellow, in a bright blue cravat, declared in the fulness of his heart, he had never had a more agreeable box-companion, always excepting flash Captain Buckstay, who, poor gentleman, had been "cast" at the Bailey for passing forged notes. Perhaps the captain's mirth and Walter's were of the same desperate family—at any rate as night came on, it fell sadly away.

Darkness crept on them; even the coachman's good humour struggled with the cold; and Mr. Burton awakened now and then to shiver and shut his eyes again. A drizzly rain fell; they passed lights at windows, but all the doors were shut. Walter envied even the trudging labourers who gave a glance at the coach as it whirled past them—they were going



humbleness of their lot—th
inured to their condition, a
it if they could—he had no
envied them for what they
them as the wretch in an o
onward to a cataract, does th
its quiet banks—he envied
had been told were blessings
he knew to be so.

They entered Islington. T
the throng of omnibusses, th
crowd of passengers, the pell
scene, sickened him—it was
him to leave "The Angel"
loudly through the streets.
nobody could tell he

of a coach. He wished this state of things might pause, if he might not say continue—it was like the moments in the press-room to the man who is to suffer death; when he stands breathing, existing, living, like those around him.

But the coachman was a smart fellow, and drove well. He had no idea of accommodating things so far. The guard who until now, had been merely an ornamental appendage, like the royal arms on the coach door, came into notice, and played "Merrily dance, the Quaker's wife," in broken snatches on his bugle —other coaches passed them, the drivers raising their whips to each other in the attitude of St. George's guard; and Walter now felt that even his friend the coachman considered him but a part of the weight which his horses were to draw to London; and that after that, he should have nothing further to do with him.

On they rattled, it was a fast coach, and the horses pulled well. On they rattled through

groves of shops, and taverns, which amids
the tumult around them, told by their
boards that they were still "entire." On
rattled, passing stationary carriages like sn
and galloping defiance past others which
struggling on their way—the very horses s
ing to forget their harness, and to exult
poor men at an election feast. Poor br
if they *have* their moments of delirium
them enjoy it a' God's name!

And Fleet Street opened to them, or r
they forced an opening into Fleet St
Bang, crash, went other wheels! never
that, the time is up, and still the cry is on
And here now is the Bull and Mouth
"Cow and Tongue," as a Scotch gentle
inside had by mistake written on his lugga
and here are waiters in slippers and dress c
and muffled guards innumerable, with way·
between their teeth; and cabs are here, p
ing forward and making all manner of sig
and horses with their heads up against

vehicles taking excuse to stand—and here too is our old acquaintance the cabman who had driven the gentlemen from the Newspaper Exchange; he has seen Mr. Burton, he springs from the dicky—dips under three horses' bellies, touches that gentleman's shoulder, and raises his forefinger to his own hat. He has got the fare—it is only a small one it is true, but there is something in getting any fare here. Portmanteaus are torn from the hands of officious porters, every body is paid, nobody of course caring for what is left behind; and in another minute or two, Walter and his friend are driving to the Lord Burleigh, with the sound of the cabman's whip falling on their ears, as if they had left London yesterday, instead of a month ago.

It was with a feeling of aggravated melancholy, that Walter followed Antony into the ancient bedroom which he had formerly occupied. When last there, its dull appearance

He threw his wet great coat on a
when Mr. Burton preceded by Ar
him to go down to the parlour, h
moment ere he followed him. His s
deeper now that he was alone—and
indeed was in the pitiless world! A
—she who had been the idol of hi
years, what was she now? There w
of sympathy from lips that he loved
eye to shame back the desolate tear t
his own—he was indeed alone!

On entering the parlour howev
cordially welcomed back again, eve
who had only seen him drink. M
writhed about with pleasure, like an
Antioch was sensibly affected, even

He wore an old, drab coach great coat, and a black glazed cover on his hat. He too shook hands with Mr. Burton and Walter with great frankness, but it was evident from his dress and look, that his circumstances also had undergone a change, in the short time since they had met.

Indeed evil had fallen upon them all. In the first place, Mr. Burton heard that his situation had been effectively filled by a young gentleman from the Dublin press; Mr. Unicorn had run himself into debt, by desperately advertising his extract of cucumbers; Doctor Antioch had been without patients; the parish vestryman, although his title is here retained, had lost his seat at the board, and was now a private person; Mr. Buckhurst was driving one of the Paddington omnibuses; and the Frenchman as he had been ruined long ago, was not worse than he was, simply because he could not be so.

All these changes will be intelligible to the

It happened that about ten days a
had gone, the first periodical vi
authorities to his school took plac
worked hard for a week, in the vain
to get his pupils to make a respectal
ance; sitting in his desk with a l
his right hand, and a pot of por
left; and by the time appointed,
imagined that they might get th
church catechism, with something
to himself and themselves. Each y
tleman had his part assigned to hi
theological study; and on the reh
evening before the examination, they
themselves so well, that he treated
round to gin and water. But the

hurst was entirely ignorant—he received the visiters most urbanely, handed them to chairs borrowed from a neighbouring public house; and all went well, until the examination came to the point, at which this absence made a gap. It was in the middle of the creed.

"Well, sir," said the inquisitor, a stout clergyman, who wore tight trowsers, and a shovel hat—"well, my young friend, what do you believe in?"

"Nothing, sir!" said the boy, looking up in his face, with hysterical apprehension.

"Nay," said the examiner, in a sonorous voice, "you believe in the Holy Ghost, the—"

"No!" cried the urchin franticly, "the boy that believes in the Holy Ghost, has gone home sick of the measles!"

All the other boys were found to be equally unprepared for the questions now put to them —some of them even, with stubborn English

theirs; until at last one litt
everything to a climax, by ins
ing his question, quietly askin
gentleman, if his mother kne
out!



Mr. Buckhurst sat as if trar
the examiners take abrupt l
stupor continued until after the
laying hold of the cane, he beat
lently out of the school, lock
went home, and went to bed.—I
hours he received his dismissal.

"You did not hear anything
of my extract of cucumbers?"
Unicorn.

"Not a word," said Mr. R...

driving on the stones?" he added, addressing Mr. Buckhurst.

"It is neither entertainment for men nor horses," said the party addressed, shaking his head.

"Well, let us be merry," resumed Pontius. "We ought all to be thankful we are neither in Scotland, nor on the sea, which I should think would hardly be entertainment for the devil himself."

"I never was in Scotland," said the vestryman, "but I have been in Scotland yard."

"Ha, ha, ha! most excellent good," said the Frenchman, with the complaisance of his nation. "The Scotch were the allies of France—but that was very long ago!"

"You are quite right," said the vestryman, returning the compliment—"your remarks, Mosshu, are always clear, sensible, and judicious."

"I did once teach the son of one Scottish

lord, my good! how rich he is!
sand pounds a year, besides econo

"Well, he can't eat more t
served the vestryman, raising hi
templatively.

"The Scotch clergy are tearing
bands about this Paul Pry bus
Intrusion," remarked Mr. Buckhu
want a few bishops among then
yet bishops have their disadvantag

"I met a very capital fellow i
said Pontius Burton, "a Mr.
Egad! I thought all the Scotch
mere sermon grinders, but this was
game cock, without a white feat
drink the honest gentleman's h

that he had touched a jarring chord. Quickly changing his theme—for his object was to make Walter, and it may be himself, forget for that night at least their precarious situation—he summoned Antony, ordered a flagon of mulled port again, paying for it himself from his slender purse—for during their journey he had in every way he could, abstained from drawing on his companion's, which was ever open to him; and the present extravagance almost left the poor fellow without a crown; and being a person of shrewd fancy, and a generous heart, he succeeded at length in inspiriting Walter to something like congeniality. Mr. Buckhurst sung various sporting songs with much joviality, and even some taste—the Frenchman caught the spirit of the hour with alacrity, and sang some of Beranger's joyous verses with great spirit—the barber gave the hilarity a sentimental turn, by an Arcadian ballad touching a certain scornful Phillis, who it appeared had

stolen his heart, and broken it afterwards; and the vestryman removed his pipe, and sang Giles Scroggin's ghost with great gravity. Doctor Antioch struck his snuff box on the table in admirable time, the clear voice of the pretty barmaid without, was sometimes heard joining in the choruses; even the landlord in his easy chair—as his wife happened to be out that evening, at a party given on the occasion of a nursery arrival in the visible world—was also now and then heard giving puffing whistles to the tunes. Walter became merry in spite of his cares; warmed with wine, his animal spirits rose above his fortunes; and at a late hour he bade Mr. Burton good night in a hearty manner, hardly hearing that gentleman's promise to be with him early on the following morning. And as Antony came shuffling up to him in the lobby, with a bedroom candle in his hand, the pretty barmaid took it suddenly out of the waiter's hands, asking him with hasty warmth who had made him a chamber-maid!

"Never mind the boot jack," said she, slightly pushing Walter up stairs, "never mind the boot-jack—I can take off the gentleman's boots myself!"

CHAPTER XIV.

How Walter Osborne visits Lucy Wrey and afterwards meets with an old acquaintance in unfortunate society.

THE next morning, Walter, with one thing or other, felt rather fatigued, and slept heavily. He was roused at rather an early hour by Mr. Burton, who came to take him to an early breakfast house—the Lord Burleigh not being in that way a place of entertainment calculated much to enliven strangers—dressed, and in a short time was ready to accompany his friend.

Pontius was now as alive and energetic as a fish escaped from hand is in its own waters, and hurrying his companion along the empty streets, soon had him in the busy room of a tavern, distinguished for having no night. All that man in a civilized state could desire in the way of breakfast, was before them — cool rounds of corned beef, steaming plates of ham and eggs, hissing sausages, broiled salmon, tea and coffee, hock bottles, popping corks of imprisoned soda water, all were around them, and the scene cheering and bustling, although half the city slept.

It was indeed a place for the most forlorn to rest upon for a time, and gain strength for any pell-mell struggle that rough times might call forth; their companion guests excepted, for they were of a motley kind. The reveller who had not slept—the man of pleasure with his haggard face—the washed actor with his hot eyes and unbrushed boots—the petted boxer, with his bull neck and filthy jest—

the "wild young gentleman," in his stained evening dress—and the painted drab calling loudly for champagne; these were their companions; and perhaps to a man not hungry, they might have given the meal a forbidding character. But Walter really was so, in spite of all he had gone through, and when he put down his coffee cup, and took the pains to look around him, he did not care much who had feasted with him, or what their relative conditions were. The sun by-and-bye in spite of the raw mists, came cheerily upon him, and hope again brightened fitfully in his mind.

To be or not to be, that was the question now. He had to be up and stirring, and new as was the state of things to him in which he should have to make haste for the means of existence, it gave a fulness and an unity to other feelings, which threw him more boldly on himself. He remembered he was still young, that wealth, when he possessed it, had, in its own relation, brought him little real

felicity, and now when he wanted it, he should at all events have the benefit of change—if not of ready money. Nay, with the lavishness of a bankrupt, he ordered a bottle of champagne, and drank it with Pontius Burton to the honor of a motto of confidence. It was a sad thing though, for his eye was too bright for the steadiness of enterprise, and his smiles were like sunshine on ice.

By and bye the two companions separated, Pontius to report himself in such quarters as he had hopes of getting employment, and Walter to find his stock-broker. The latter was easily done. The broker, a trimly built, shrewd looking man, received him with cheerful warmth, made him sit down, shut the door, after calling out some directions to his clerks in another room; and then began to account minutely for the time wasted through uncertain addresses, and letters delayed in their destinations. All this was very unsatisfactory to Walter, and it was not the less so, when the

broker told him, that if Spanish stock were to be wheeled into his office in barrows full, he would not give a shilling more for it than the rate at which he had sold his. The balance in his favor was eleven pounds eighteen and fourpence—he might look over the accounts and calculate it himself. It was placed to his credit, and might remain there to be taken into any future account, or he was quite ready to pay it now. Not seeing any prospect, for some time at least, of having any spare funds to invest, Walter put the miserable remnant of his fortune into his purse, and left the broker to entertain some other speculators who were waiting his leisure in another room.

The stream of life was now filling the streets —some were pressing on, some talking leisurely together, while they too, progressed at the uniform business-like pace—he was a stone in the channel, for he knew not whither to go. He was jostled aside, run against, and but for his apparent strength of body, might have

received rougher treatment; the cabs that prowled up the street, gave him signals to seek their refuge, and hardly knowing what he did, he answered one of these.

"Where?" said the cabman, putting his forefinger to his hat, after he had shut the door. Where!—that was the question.

He suddenly bethought him of Lucy Wrey, and although without any motive but the perfect absence of one—which paradoxical as it may sound, is in itself a very frequent rule of human action—told the cabman that address, and bade him drive to it.

He found Lucy alone; she was seated as before, there had been no change in her condition, the tedium of hopeless toil, the long, dull day of industry, and the night of bitter dreams—her duties had been the same, and had been borne with the same quiet patience as before. Yet her feelings, her mother observed were more depressed than formerly, and she now sometimes saw tears fall on the work the girl

bent over. It was very sad, said the peevish old gentlewoman never to get a cheerful look from the child for whom she had done so much, particularly in infancy; it was true, she worked and all that, but she really ought to think of her mother's feelings—she ought to be lively and cheerful, because she was young. "When I was your age, Lucy," she would say, "I was as gay as the lark, and I almost think, if I had tried, I might have flown as high—but you sit there day and night without trying in any way to keep up my spirits, I that have done so much for you. But that is the gratitude mothers may expect for all they have endured for their children, which nobody but mothers can tell," (a thing by the bye which they are always very much inclined to do.) But the mild eyes that would look on her at these times, seldom failed to disarm the old lady's petulance, and she would say to herself, that Lucy after all was a sweet, lovely girl, and who what with her beauty, and her own discern-

ment, and extreme knowledge of the world, would no doubt one day in spite of her present circumstances, make a good match, and restore everything as it was again, or better.

Lucy received Walter with some embarrassement, yet cordially too. The blush covered the sudden paleness which had blanched her cheek, and her eyes brightened with timid pleasure, as he took her cold hand in his. She enquired regarding Katherine Brandon, Walter said he had found her, but begged Lucy not to enquire more at present, as there was a mystery about her condition, on which comment would be injurious. She watched the look of pain with which he said this, and cast down her meek eyes thoughtfully.

They spoke of former days; Walter's heart softened at their memories, they spoke earnestly and warmly, until the miserable place around them, almost vanished from their eyes: and it seemed as if they sat again in the cool summer parlour of the old vicarage, with its

grey walled, rose gardens, and the fair landscape of wood and dale beyond. It was a sweet hour to both—once or twice Lucy asked of Spain, and the lands in which Walter had passed the last few years of his life, but he spoke coldly of them, and some word, some comparison, always brought them back to old scenes again. Walter forgot the heartburnings he had experienced there; he forgot the petty jealousies which had made him leave his birth-place in bitterness—all that was forgotten now—he only remembered the breezy hill side, the oak walled, ancient rooms of his father's house, so familiar to his memory; and the caresses of his mother, who had loved him with all her heart. He remembered the shady church road, the sunday greetings, and the good men who had met him there; his father's jokes as they had ridden along—they were poor matters, but the kind old man now was dead! He remembered Lucy's father too, the hospitable, single hearted, blunt, right honest man—the

thorough Englishman, with all his faults, did his pastoral duties worthily, although he loved the old English rural sports, and might have held a truncheon perhaps as fitly as a prayer book. He remembered kindnesses also which he himself had paid, to many whose gratitude it may be had forgotten him—but that was another theme, and one which even reason itself was content to cover now. For all faults, even the worst of those he had known then, he thought with the poet—

"I care not, 'tis a glance at auld lang syne!"

When Mrs. Wrey surprised them, Lucy was speaking more warmly than was her wont, and tears were struggling in both their eyes. The good lady was much pleased at this, and drew her own conclusions from it.

"You have been to Scotland, Mr. Osborne," said she, when their mutual greetings were over, "and pretty Kate Brandon, did you find her? Dear me, it is a sad thing for young

ladies to lose their mothers young. Had my poor, dear friend Lady Mary been alive, this sad business never would have happened. But did you find her, Mr. Osborne, and how is she looking, poor dear? She was always reckoned a beauty, but between you and me, I have thought that she sometimes looked rather brown about the temples. Now Lucy there—bless me! is the child ill?"

"I am quite well, mama, I assure you," said Lucy, turning her head away, and taking up her work.

"Well, Mr. Osborne, and how is poor Kate looking, after all that is past and gone—but dear, dear, my poor head!—you have not told me yet, if you found her?"

"I found her," said Walter, in a tone of ice, "and I believe she is quite well."

"I am glad to hear it, indeed I am, everybody must be glad to hear it that knew poor dear Lady Mary as I did; but Kate was always—in spite of that gentle look which she

could put on to serve a purpose—Kate was always a strong thing; she could leap her horse over a gate in a way that would make me shiver, and strike my poor husband with her riding whip, challenging him to a race in a way that I should not have liked any daughter of *mine* to have done. There was yourself Mr. Osborne, it was said she used to make her evening rides very near your father's house, the the dear, good, old man! and there was the young curate of Hilton, I have seen them sitting together at Brandon hall many a long hour while I was playing whist; and the militia officers at the hurdle race when you were in Spain; she rode among them like a trooper, and my poor husband said if she had been in the race, she would have beaten them all. Kate was always a strange girl, and we see now what has come of it."

"She was always good and worthy," said Lucy, her cheek crimsoned, and her meek eyes brightening warmly, "there is not in the world

a better or kinder-hearted being than Katherine Brandon."

"Well, well, Lucy love, she has carried it to a pretty market, that's all. You will make some stay in London, Mr. Osborne?"

"I fear I must," said Walter.

"It is not a thing to regret. I am sure when I was your age, Mr. Osborne, I looked on London as the promised land, and I came here sometimes with my poor, dear aunt—she is not so long dead, but I never think of her without regret. My grand-mama too, poor dear soul, she only died twelve years ago—used on my return to make me laugh till my sides ached, asking such out of the way questions about people dead and burried before I was born. I married very young, very young indeed, Mr. Osborne, and had a wisdom tooth after Lucy was born."

This interesting fact was one to which Walter could make no reply, so he said nothing.

"Dear, dear, what a wild young creature I was! and it is not so long ago, Lucy is only nineteen, though she looks older—nineteen her last birthday; I was quite a child when she was born, and used to have my doll on one side and her on the other. We are often taken for sisters now—indeed the green-grocer at the corner of the street says I look the younger of the two, but that is flattery of course. He is a very good looking man himself."

Walter mechanically looked from the mother to the daughter, but saw no necessity for expressing an opinion.

"Don't you think Lucy much improved, Mr. Osborne? I assure you she never walks out—although that poor thing is not oftener than she can avoid—that she is not admired—the green grocer told me that; and only last week a young gentleman followed her all the way home from Catherine Street, and came into the shop afterwards and bought a pair of fire screens. I could see, although I was in

this room, that he thought more of her than of the fire screens, although they were very pretty ones, with ebony handles. And then he tried as much as he could to pay her compliments, but Lucy was as cold as snow. He called the day following, but I was forced to attend him myself, for Lucy would not stir; yet he was a most handsome, gentlemanly, young man."

Walter glanced towards the poor girl, and saw that her cheek was suffused with a painful blush.

"Good God!" thought he, "is it possible that a mother has no quicker wits, for the honour of her child!"

"You will come and see us often Mr. Osborne," continued Mrs. Wrey, as she observed Walter take up his hat.

"I am afraid," stammered Walter "that—that—"

At that moment the mild eyes of the girl looked towards him.

"That what?" demanded Mrs. Wrey; "surely, Mr. Osborne, you will find time now and then to come here for an hour. I have many matters of business to speak to you about, and it may be to presume on old acquaintance, to ask your advice and good offices regarding them."

"I shall do myself that pleasure as often as I can, and my good offices, poor as I fear you may find them, are heartily at your service." So saying he took leave, more melancholy than he yet had been, for he felt now one of the sharpest miseries of poverty—that of being unable to aid the helpless, who think that it is in our power.

But once again in the streets, even such thoughts as these were soon lost sight of, in the presence of more pressing matters. He remembered that he had several small debts in London—tailors, sadlers, gunmakers, and other tradesmen, who had been in the habit of furnishing him with their wares when he was

abroad. Their probable bills his conjectures fretted up to an amount of fifty or sixty pounds, and he had not the half of that sum in the world. He was not only in poverty, but in debt—and this thought was for the moment the bitterer of the two. He had walked towards the west part of the town, and it was one of those shops which recalled these matters to his mind, and he stole past the place like one who had done a guilty action. His step became less light, his look less haughty, and his self love was hurt at the accidental glance he got of the reflection of his own countenance, in the mirror of a shop he passed hastily by.

The consciousness of the want of money came more and more actively upon him. His lot was a singular one. Born in comparative affluence, and for years the possessor of considerable wealth, he was without any friends upon whom he had the slightest claims, to request the assistance of that influence, which

breaks the rich man's fall, and finds him a refuge from the severer consequences of ruin. Walter had none of those, and had no other means of weathering this sudden storm of life than nature and education gave him—and these, as he now contemplated them, as the means for such an end, did not seem to go for much.

It is an odd instinct which makes ruined men go to hear the bands play in the parks, but no where in London are such collections of melancholy countenanced persons to be found as there. Walter obeyed his destiny in this respect, and sauntered thither. Here he saw a group of unhappy faces, in many of which suicide was written in characters that a physiognomist might easily have read—vagrant Poles buttoned to the throat—Frenchmen in long surtouts with large Carlist features, hungry enthusiasts for soup maigre and the christian king—shabbily dressed artists—broken-hearted bankrupts, unshaven, and sad—squalid Irish-

men defeated in their just hopes of captivating English heiresses, and one or two dirty gentlemen, with port wine and pudding countenances, looking as forlorn as butchers' dogs of a good breed, starving sulkily. There were also one or two red-coated, barefooted vagabonds of the Spanish Legion, whose looks, Walter, for reasons of his own, carefully avoided. And there they were all grouped together listening to a lively air from "Robert le Diable." Nursery maids passed them, disdaining to linger even to listen to music in such hopeless company, heavy slow-moving coaches of dowagers, with poodles looking out at the windows, rolled quietly along on their constitutional but unfashionable drives, the very pickpockets disdained to ruffle through the poverty-stricken crowd, well knowing the utter hopelessness of their vocation there; the stiff-necked policemen walked majestically by, fully aware that all was right as far as active desperation went, in such a group, nobody having anything, even mischief, to do, ever coming

to listen to the band; and the only passengers who paid them the slightest attention, were one or two men in the employment of the Humane Society. As Walter stood on the outskirts of the crowd, listening to the music, he felt some one touch his shoulder, and looking round met, to his no small surprise, a well remembered face.

THE END OF VOL. I.

T. C. Newby, Printer, 65, Mortimer Stre

THE GRAVE DIGGER.



T. C. Newby, Printer, 65, Mortimer Street, Cavendish Square.

THE GRAVE DIGGER.



THE GRAVE-DIGGER.

CHAPTER I.

How Walter Osborne became accommodated with a Scotch Valet under peculiar circumstances.

The person who had accosted Walter was a strongly built, hard-featured man, of that age which puzzles conjecture as to years, and reduces description in this respect, to the comprehensive term of early manhood, or any other of a similarly general kind. He was poorly but comfortably dressed, his coat patched, his hat ruined, but his shoes were strong, and his

linen white as snow. He made a military salute, which was in bad keeping with the familiar expression of his countenance, and even held out his hand, no way abashed that the other took it coldly.

"Guthrie," exclaimed Walter, "what in the world has brought you here?"

"Guthrie it is, or raether I should say a'that's left o'him," answered the other, "Priam Guthrie by name, ex-troop-sergeant in the service of the Queen of Spain, and now at large in his ain service, which, although less respectable, is equally well paid."

"I am sorry to hear it is not better, sergeant," said Walter.

"Better it might easily be, but to be waur would be impossible captain, for I never got a bawbee after you left us."

"Tush man, don't call me captain," said Walter peevishly.

"And dinna ye ca' me sergeant, for I mak bold to say our military ranks are no a thing to sit comfortably in either o' our memories. For

my part, the very name of sergeant, would mak me hungry after a full meal—a blessing I have seldom now-a-days to say grace for. And a' this comes o' readin the Waverly no-vels instead o' minding the o-ven, letting the bread burn, and ruining my character for diligence and trustworthiness."

"And what had the Waverly novels to do with the Queen of Spain's exchequer?" demanded Walter.

"Naething that I ken o'," answered the other, "but they had a sair deal to do wi' me. When I read o' wars and battles, and roystering in boots and spurs, slashing here, and tearing there, I got sick o' the baker business; I could ha' borne to be a blacksmith, after the example of Harry Wynd, but to be a baker, I could na' endure it. If I had been but wise enough to be content with, 'the Mysterious Pregnancy,' 'Love and Madness,' 'Manfrone, or the One-handed Monk,' I might have succeeded to a good business; but as it

was I behoved to throw rolls and o-ven shovels to the coals, and 'list into the service o' this disastrous queen. I had a good seat in the saddle, having had to carry twa baskets o' bread to the country every day; and kenning something o' horseflesh besides, I got promoted as I expected. I did my duty, as ye can testify, for I had hopes o' one day being a field marshal, like the Frenchman that battled under Bouny-party, or at least gettin' a comfortable berth in the commissariat—but heaven direct our judgments! before I left the service, a strong man might have carried all our stores on his back, and I would hae given a marshal's baton, for a leg o' highland mutton. We were starved to the doors o' death!"

"I have heard things went on badly," said Walter.

"Badly! It was na *badly*, it was waur than badly, or any other carnal name. When I asked for my pay, they tried to shut my mouth by offering to make me a cornet

but I wanted something to eat, and not to glorify myself upon; so ye see I took a moonlight flitting ae bonny summer night, and fought and scrambled my way to Cadiz, where I met a Scotch skipper bound for London, and he gave me free will passage, for the sake o' our common country—and here I arrived some three months ago, sound in body, but sincerely distressed in mind."

"Well, and what then, Guthrie?"

"Naething pleesant or profitable, I assure you—I got work as a baker, after mony a weary walk frae shop to shop; I had to drive a dog in a cart, but my conscience could na let me endure to see the poor brute suffer as he did—for I have a kindly nature to beasts,—so ae day I loosened him frae his harness—it was a fine Newfoundland dog—but the brute, it would seem, had been sold to my master by a dog-stealer, and as ill luck would hae it, just as I had him out o' the harness, a carriage came up and the beast jumped at it as if bereft o' his

senses. A lady called him Sneezer, and he would hae broken down the door if it had na been opened to him. I claimed the dog, but the footman threatened to give me in charge to the police, so off ran the carriage, dog and a', and I had to mak the best story o' the matter I could to my master. It did not suffice, and I was turned out o' doors, wi mony a bitter word."

"That was bad enough, and what happened then?"

"Just what happens now, I come here now and then to listen to the band."

"You have now no place then, nothing to do?"

"Naething that I hope to be paid for, and that is just the same thing."

"And how do you manage to live Guthrie?"

"Ye see, that Spanish business has given me an endurance o' fasts, and the twa months I was in employ, I was careful enough to save a trifle, but its ill braggin o' that, for if I had na gotten a letter a day or twa ago, frae my uncle Simeon Delvin at Skerryton—I wrote the carl,

he is my mither's brother, but doure, and worldly minded—but as I heard she left a cow and other valuables at her death, I made bold to demand my rights; and to my surprise the auld Judas sent me a five pound note, wi a great deal o' abuse, which nae doubt, he intended for good advice."

"And what do you purpose doing now?"

"I had mony things in view, but of course a' that is at an end, now that I have met with you."

"I don't see how your meeting with me should change your plans, I am nearly as poor as yourself, and I am really sorry to say my old friend, that I cannot assist you in any way."

"Aweel then, it may be I can assist you."

"I don't see very well how."

"Do you keep a horse now captain?"

"No deuce a horse have I, nor the means of keeping one if I had," said Walter hastily.

"Nor a man servant?"

"No, nor maid servant, ox or ass, I have not

thirty pounds in the world—so you see it will be prudent for you to look elsewhere for service."

"The deil be at my feet then," said the Scotchman with energy—"Did na we battle twa lang years thegither, and was na ye my only friend in Spain—did na ye send me meat frae your ain table—gie me siller frae your ain purse, besides speak mony a kind word, which I valued mair than a'—aye when 'Scotch-dog,'—'hungry rascal,' 'grumbling vagabond,' were the only civilities I got frae the others in office—a bonny office it was to us a'—and besides a' that, do ye think I forget that morning when our troop had a skrimmage, when peacefully employed in stealing fodder for our poor dumb beasts, that morning when the bluidy dragoons came rampagin' down upon us, and my mere burdened with the hay, I carried on her back, and weakened poor beast wi the want o' it elsewhere, staggered, and pulled heavily on the bridle, wi twa of thae bluidthirsty swords glancin before my een—how ye rode up, and

laid about ye. Ye were mounted on Black Bess that mornin, I hae groomed the mere mony a day after it frae pure love—how ye struck one of the vagabonds to the ground, and laid the other's shoulder open wi' a cut that warmed my very heart to see, and how ye cheered me wi, 'well done Guthrie! a good stroke! never mind the pistols! (for the hay was on them) cut the rascals down!' fightin' a' the time by my side, like a knight in a story-book—do ye think I can ever forget that mornin'? No by my soul; and there's my han' captain, if ever I fail you at a pinch, whether in peace or war, may honest folk spit upon my grave."

Walter took the proffered hand, but coldly still. "Upon my word," said he, "this is an idle promise from a person like you, to one in my circumstances, I can do you no good, and it would add to my own unhappiness to see you suffer on my account."

"That's what you'll never see," said the other. "I hae three pounds, thirteen, besides

a sma' matter o' copper left, and you'll find me nae burden, but the reverse. You see I want a head."

"What do you mean by that? you were always considered shrewd enough."

"Naething I want in the way o' discretion—save us a' frae vain boastin'!—but you see, I want somebody I can ca' my patron, somebody to look up to—its a muirland confidence in a mist, to be my ain uncontrolled master—it's a thing I dinna like. Now to advise and control you like, would gie me confidence, you see."

"You are very obliging indeed, but my good friend I want nobody at present to control me; when I stand in need of restraint, I dare say I shall find it, without making provision beforehand."

"That's a hasty way of speakin'," said the other, wholly unmoved—"twa heads are better than ane, and I surmeese if ye had taen me wi you when ye left us, as I prayed sair ye would do, ye would na now hae a cauld coal to blow,

as is the case I aye said that the gold slipped ower easily frae your han'. Na, na, ye are the master of my adoption, and with you I will abide."

"I ought at least to have a voice in the matter," said Walter—

"Mickle better no, mickle better no—Where are ye lodging?"

"At a tavern, called the Lord Burleigh."

"Heaven hae a care o' us! Living at a public! Ye maun leave it instanter."

"That is my own opinion," said Walter, not much pleased however with the despotic tone, in which the advice was communicated.

"Instanter! instanter!" continued the Scotsman, "and let me see.—Ye can get a nice cheerful room frae my landlady, a douce respectable woman—ay in the same floor as mine. Heaven make us thankfu' for a' its mercies!"

"And were does this landlady of yours live?" demanded Walter, secretly not sorry at hearing

of a lodging, which he doubted not was an economical one.

"East, very far east, about the Mile-end-road —but it is a good, clean house, quiet and honest, and has a bit blink o' green fields near it."

"That is just the sort of place I should wish," said Walter.

"Of course, of course, but leave a' that to me. Now have ye dined?"

"No I have not."

"I thought as much. Well if ye will tak a sma' walk to Kensington Gardens, it will put a spur to your appetite, and I will attend you there, and then conduct you to some modest dining rooms. This way—go ye first and I will follow—only pause a bit when ye come to cross ways."

"Not so fast Mr Guthrie," said Walter, "I know Kensington Gardens well enough—but I don't see now, that it is prudent to take you into my service, when I have hardly the means of keeping myself."

"Fear na for me," said the other sturdily—"When you find me a burden, dismiss me at a word."

"A word does not seem to be enough for that," said Walter—"If there *is* to be a compact between us, it must at least be a reasonable one. I have no objection, since you wish it, to use your services now and then as I may require them; and to reward them as I may; but to allow you to make yourself dependent on me, to the exclusion of other means of gaining your livelihood, is what I cannot in conscience do."

"I am willing to any thing in reason," said Mr. Guthrie, "but to think that I will part wi' ye—a patron sent as I may say by a kind o' Providence, is what I'll never hear o'"

"Well then since you are determined to be my servant, I must exercise the privelege of being master—my own at least—and I have no wish or intention of going to Kensington Gardens. Lead the way to these dining-rooms

at once; I breakfasted early, and have some questions to ask you about our late companions, in that ill-starred expedition, which has ruined many others as well as us."

"The greater number were pretty well ruined before," said the Scotchman, "and yet the last end o' thae men, is waur than the first. This way to the dining rooms, I will keep three feet in advance."

Walter followed his old friend through the park, feeling as he passed many places in that fashionable region, how great the change in his circumstances was, which, instead of the horse, the smart mounted groom, and the light heart with which he had formerly passed them, now saw him trudging to some obscure tavern, led by a person in a patched suit, who called himself his servant, while he himself, his hopes blasted, his fortune gone, and a more painful thought than even all that depressing his mind, hardly knew if in a few weeks he might not in very truth be without the means of existence.

Dinner and a pint of wine, albeit not of the most recherché kind—an extravagance regarding which Mr. Guthrie commented sorely—had, in spite of all his misfortunes, put Walter in such heart, that he could not only endure himself, but what was more difficult, the humours of his follower; and it was with the air of a person much at his ease, that he sat and listened to details of misfortunes, chiefly of an aggravated domestic character, which had lately befallen his companions in arms. But Guthrie himself, who liked his liquor (whiskey punch) and his company, beginning to neglect the more interesting current of his narrative, in an elaborate enumeration of his own peculiar privations—as well as to assume a gravity of self-importance, more befitting a patriarch than a serving man, Walter saw it was high time to put an end to the conference, and accordingly dismissed him, directing him however to come to the Lord Burleigh that evening, and have a cab ready to take his trunks to his new lodg-

ings, which in the meantime the ex-sergeant was instructed to get prepared.

Priam obeyed alertly, and Walter with some relief found himself alone. A cup of coffee and a newspaper, which he had patiently waited for some time, were brought to him, and listless as a man in easy circumstances, he leaned back in the corner of his seat, raised his feet to the cushion, crossed his legs, and read the Court Circular. "Come," thought he, "I am in no worse state than many now whirling past the windows in their carriages. Many of those, I doubt not, have mental sufferings, seared hearts, and the dread of wanting money in perspective, and yet they roll along, drink their wine, and read the debates in parliament; and why should not I? That wine was heating, by the bye, and this coffee is somewhat worse than is usually drank by gentlemen who have good credit at a respectable grocer's, but," continued Walter, sipping it, "the flavour of a cup of

coffee is a poor thing after all, to disturb one's peace of mind."

He read long columns drowsily, there were some flourishes in one or two parliamentary speeches about doing justice to the officers and soldiers who had fought so illustriously in Spain, but the police reports and coroners' inquests were too much sprinkled with the actions and condition of these unfortunate champions of civil and religious liberty all over the world, to give him any very bright hopes from such flourishes in St. Stephen's. They were quite of a Westminster Abbey kind.

From this he wandered to the advertisements, but finding there nothing likely to suit him, as he neither knew book-keeping nor engineering, he waded through the small paragraphs filled with moving incidents by fire and flood, which had created sensations in their respective neighbourhoods. Among these his eyes fell on an announcement that the lady of Sir Edmund Arden died at Milan on the 18th



paid his bill, and left the pl

In the evening he met
Lord Burleigh as had bee
tween them, and that gentl
that he had been successful
get something to do—having
prepare articles on horticultu
ment of death, to write a pre
vocabulary, and to attend to
for a morning paper during th
sence of the regular official, wh
ously hurt by a blow with a pew
the eyes by an intoxicated cabm
before. Pontius also mentione
seemed to give him more lively
his own success, that he had

private view of which would take place the following day. It was a thing, he added, which from Walter's conversations on art, he was convinced he could do well, and it would be handsomely paid for. Moreover, he would have an opportunity of meeting a pretty fair assemblage of rank, the representatives of the cant of criticism, as well as many intelligent specimens of living beauty in those painted halls.

Mr. Guthrie arrived as the clock struck the hour he had been appointed to attend, and after a smart skirmish with the barmaid, who told him first that Walter was not in the house, and then that he was engaged and could not see anybody; both of which communications Priam treated with civil incredulity, Antony was at length captured as he passed defenceless through the lobby, carrying a medley of brimming glasses and tobacco pipes; and requested to announce to Walter, that his servant and cab were waiting. Priam obtained per-

mission to carry the trunks to the cab, read over his master's bill item by item at the bar light, turning up his eyes every now and then at the charges, as well as making a running commentary on them for the benefit of the bar-maid—quietly summed up the bill, and putting his initials on the back, gave it to Antony to take to his master.

It was with some regret, and a promise to visit them often, that Walter took leave of his friends at the Lord Burleigh; and when he turned his back on the house, and passed through the dark lane, he felt that even this change in his condition, trifling as it seemed in itself, was one which affected him more than many greater vicissitudes had done in former days. That nervous state of mind which makes us disposed to cling to any semblance of support, and to shrink from encountering new hazards, although to remove a more desperate state of things,—like the feeling of the heart-stricken mariner which makes him remain on

the cracking wreck rather than trust himself to the rope which might pull him through the surf—that worst deceit which startled sensation puts upon our reason, wretched as the security of the poor bird that covers its head in the sand, as if *that* would conceal its body from the hunters—that helpless feeling which in woman is an instinct, in cowards natural, but in the bold tells more painfully even than desperation, of the extent of mental depression and hopeless sorrow of the secret heart. It was this unhappy state of mind which was beginning to come on Walter now, and made him feel more forlorn, every step he took from that tavern door.

It was late when he reached his new lodgings, and too dark to form any very accurate idea of the extent of the building. His landlady, a sallow faced woman, with dyed grey hair, and a quiet, spare diet expression of countenance, met him at the door, and conducted him to a

front room having a small sleeping apa
opening from it. His luggage was s
placed, the cab dismissed, and Priam, wh
taken upon himself something of the ch
of master of the ceremonies, stood befo
in the attitude of "attention," after
politely assisted the landlady out of the
by opening the door for her, and shutting
as to accelerate her retirement.

"We have both had worse quarters th
sir," said he, looking complacently at the
in which a small fire had burned itse
clear smokeless glow.

"It is a very poor place," said Walter,
ing round on the cracked paper on the
the inclined floor—for the house was ve
and had a slight stoop—a cracked oval
a map of London, a shepherdess in needl
and the seasons personified by four French
with smartly dressed hair, on the walls;
of drawers at one end, old chairs placed

and a round, unsafe looking table in the middle of the floor—"a very poor place upon my word."

"It's no to be compared wi some places at the West End, it would be needless to dispute," answered Priam, "but for sobriety, honesty wi sharp looking after, and decorum of every kind, there's not a better house in the wide bounds of London. It is also a safe neighbourhood, for there is a Scotch Church in the immediate vicinity, and a fire escape at the corner of the street."

"Ah well," said Walter drawing near the fire, "I suppose all that is very pleasant."

"There was a firework manufactory next door but one, but heaven be praised, it is now blown up, and naebody was killed but Irishmen. Mak' us thankful for every thing!"

"There is nothing more of that sort going to happen I hope," observed the other.

"Fear na that: it is a quiet neighbourhood now—where a man may sleep soundly, under

the care of Providence, and the police s
that lives over the way. My room is
floor, the door is at the stair head."

"I shall not want any thing more to-
said Walter languidly.

"Ye maun excuse me," said Priam, "
nae good to gang to bed dry lipped in a
house, and I hae a bottle of most se
whiskey—the real mountain dew—whic
bring you; and there is hot water down
sae ye can mak yoursel, comfortable
braw amber mouthed pipe beside you
coat, while I solace mysel in my ain roo
a pamphlet on the great question of N
trooshin, which I borrowed frae the b
the corner of the street—or if you like it
I will read it to you, explaining at th
time the leading points."

"No, there is no occasion for that—ju
me that same pipe if you please, and b
a small canister you will find in the co
that trunk."

This was done, the whiskey and hot water also appeared—Priam snuffed the candle and bade him good night, and Walter lighted his meerchaum, and composed himself to meditation.

CHAPTER. II.

In which Walter Osborne appears on a new scene, and meets an ominous obstruction in going to it.

It would appear that Priam had read heavily of the tough, controversial matter which so disturbed the stubborn spirits of his countryman, for Walter, by no means an early riser in general, was up and stirring on the following morning, a full hour before his self-elected valet made his appearance. A sallow, undersized, indigenous, London lodging-house servant-girl had already lighted his fire, stimulating the atmosphere of the place with the odour of burnt cork—there

being a cork-cutter in the vicinity, who supplied the house this with prompt combustible—his small sitting room had been brushed, and all the spiders in the corners, to the height of four feet, whisked from their retreats—the thin carpet was as clean as its nature would permit, and the table placed on a level, in spite of the slanting floor, by means of Buchan's Domestic Medicine, ingeniously inserted under one of its legs.

Walter looked from the window, and his heart sank within him. An unhealthy looking, open space of black land, with mouldy verdure on it here and there, shut in by small smoke blackened brick houses, a kind of turnstile at the end of a long protecting bar of decayed white painted wood, forming the entrance—was the first object that met his view. Here were a few groups of dirty innocents of both sexes, amusing themselves with slovenly games; and drabs of housemaids throwing out ashes and egg-shells; the former rising in clouds over

their own heads, and blowing against windows, on the sinking wings of the depre wind, which had ventured so far from muddy river side—a donkey or two, loo like poor men in a court of justice, rather animals on a pasture-field, and a dust with a low flapped hat, strong shoes, and c less legs, eating a breakfast of thick s wiches melancholy on a prostrate p Directly opposite the window, were on two dirty houses, with green doors, b which a milkman was uttering dolorous c and in the extreme distance were glimpses o tops of some desponding trees. The sou vehicles from Mile-end-road on one hand, the goblin cries of urchins on the other, fu enlivened the scene.

Poverty in London is surely worse poverty any where else. There is a heart ening reality about it which is not in places. The thought that he was without fo cast naked on the world, had hitherto and depressed Walter, by the sickening

of his own incapacity to restore himself to the circumstances which he had once enjoyed, but never, not even on its first announcement, had it startled him as it did now. He had read of such calamities as his, and fondly remembered how their victims had triumphed over them, but he felt that to experience them was a very different thing. And his were aggravated by another thought, which converted his present circumstances into chains of despair—he had no kindred either; if he died there, his very grave would be as unheeded as a stone by the way side—he had done nothing to raise himself above the herd, over whom death's oblivion was daily passing, he was an atom in existence, whose fate and whose sufferings were his own alone. "The poor weep unheeded"—he remembered the proverb, and in former days he had considered it a very pretty saying, but he now felt that it was indeed a bitter thing.

"Good mornin'," said Priam Guthrie, entering the room. "I hae been to get hot rolls for

your breakfast, I had to return the pamphlet on the great question of Non introoshin' this morning, and I had the pick o' the rolls. But dear, dear! nae man kens what he eats under the name o' white bread in this city o' Babylon—bone dust, potatoe flour, chalk, and other inviting ingredients come as heavy into the weight as wheaten-flour. But Michael, that is the baker's name, Michael Gillespié is a countryman o' mine, and has twa sorts of bread, honest man, ane for his ain family and his friends, and the other for the public, so ye may eat your rolls as I may say, under your ain fig-tree."

"Pray man, don't stand there prosing in that way," said Walter, "but get them to bring me breakfast. There is no bell, I see in this room."

"Breakfast ye shall hae, and pardon my vanity it will be a good ane. A good breakfast to a steady, sensible man who kens how to tak advantage o' it will mak him careless

about wantin' a denner, at a promiscuous time. I hae gottin' a smoked haddock broiling for you—twa new-laid eggs ready to be boiled—a bit o' kippered salmon, a morsel o' ham, to prepare the way for a slice or twa o' hung beef, and I hae ingratiated mysel sae far wi' the baker's wife, that she has made ye a present o' a jar o' civil orange marmalade; so what wi' the tea and sugar, which I also procured at an assured place, ane o' the grocer's shopmen having been an apprentice to Baillie Boortree at Skerryton; and the milk, which I had at a dairyman whose accounts I put in order every Saturday night—ye will see that, under Providence, ye will hae a breakfast which may mak ye brook a cheap dinner, or a long fast, things the best o' us maun now and then experience in broken times."

"What sort of breakfast will this be?" said Walter surprised at such an enumeration of solids. "Why Guthrie, you must not go on getting together such a menagerie of out-of-

the-way food for me. I shall not be able to eat half of it, and as you are such an advocate for economy, I think your prudence might have made you cater within more reasonable bounds."

"It's no extravagance, but foresight," said Priam, "a good breakfast is an endowment for the day, and saves mair than twice the first expense—but I see ye are gettin impatient, so I shall set about accelleratin' the movements of that lazy jawd down stairs."

So saying Mr. Guthrie departed, and in a few minutes returned, accompanied by the servant, loaded with the things he had mentioned, himself carrying the tea-kettle and keeping an anxious eye on her movements.

In spite of Walter's objection to the catering, he did not fail to do justice to the meal, which was really excellent in its separate parts, whatever it might be considered in its aggregate character—although he fell far short of what Priam expected he would; the latter however comforting himself with the shrewd reflection

that if their present circumstances continued much longer, his master would learn to appreciate better the advantages of such a repast.

"And now," resumed Priam beginning to arrange the things preparatory to their removal, "what do you say to a sma' nip o' the craeter to guard against fogs?"

"What do you mean now?" inquired his master.

"A thimble fu', na mair than a thimble fu'," said Priam taking out the whiskey bottle, and pouring out about the third of a glass, which he handed to his master, who although an old campaigner, had no great relish for ardent spirits, particularly whiskey *au naturel.* He drank it however as it was a trifle, out of a pure desire to please his follower, or rather to avoid his pragmatical expostulations; and sooth to say, he found that when its smoky chokingness had passed from the throat, that it formed a capital *chassé* to the sort of breakfast he had consumed. He got up, walked about the room

with a lighter step and a more cheerful eye than had distinguished him since his arrival in London.

"Well now Guthrie," said Walter, when that gentleman; in about a quarter of an hour returned after having finished his own breakfast. "I am going as far west as Charing Cross, to an exhibition of paintings, which I am engaged to write a notice of for a morning paper, and probably shall not return until the evening. May I ask what you propose to do during that time?"

"Just to accompany you, if it be your pleasure," said Priam.

"But it is not my pleasure," said his master, "You can be of no service to me where I am going, and you know our compact has a condition, that your services are only to be casual, and that you are to endeavour to find out some other employment for yourself."

"Aweel, for the matter o' a denner, and some pleesant conversation on the great question

o' Non Introoshin, I can sort up Michael Gillespie's books—but tell me at what hour ye are to return, and I will be under arms."

"About six or seven o'clock perhaps—but for Heaven's sake look out for some employment of a rational kind, and don't render your circumstances more desperate than they are already, by wasting your time in needless attendance on me."

"There go twa words to every bargain,"—said Priam, "ye hae been my friend and muir—my only friend at a time when your open purse made every body ready to be yours. I see as well as you—perhaps mickle better—the needcessity o' finding employment, but for a week or sae, deil hae me if I think o' it!—ye are sad hearted, and this change in your fortunes has well nigh broken your spirits—ye maun let me do my best to smooth down the rough edges of things for a time; and I promise ye that as soon as I see ye easy in your mind, grass shall na grow under my feet, in looking out for

employment for the time that will not be required by you."

"But ere then both our purses may be empty. Can't your wisdom see that?"

"It would ill become my responsible situation," said Priam gravely, "not to have baith seen and considered it. Now for my ain part I hae about me what will keep me for twa lunar months, that is to say but sax weeks in verity, but I mak' it a point o' prudence to pay the landlady but once a fortnight, so that aye gies me twa weeks beyond the inherent faculties o' my purse, to come and go upon. Ye are still better off, for I warrant, wi' a' your extravagance ye will be enabled to keep clear o' the constable for a month mair than that."

"Live for three months, on—let me see," said Walter, taking three five pound notes out of his purse, "and one, two, three, four, sovereigns—by the bye Guthrie there's a five pound note for you to meet expenses—live for

three months, on nineteen pounds. Well and supposing that done, there may not be nineteen farthings for the like period afterwards."—

"Hoot awa!" said the Scotsman gaily, "we maun keep up our hearts. Mony a ane has come to London wi less pence than ye hae pounds, and lived to mak life and death bargains for loans o' ready money wi kings and emperors.

"Draw the swurd! Scotland, Scotland, Scotland!"

"Hold your cursed tongue," said Walter, savagely, for Priam, snapping his fingers and singing without any remorse of voice, seemed to think his view of matters admitted of no further question. "You must set about getting employment immediately, without any reference to me, or our bargain is at end. It is quite enough that I should suffer myself, without dragging to destruction a person who was always considered a prudent man, but who now is playing the fool before my eyes in a way that

I should be the most silly or most selfish of beings to allow."

"Selfishness was never a charge against you," said Priam, "but, under hope o' forgiveness, imprudence aften was. This is on my part, a duty, an affair o' conscience, like the great question of——"

"Well well well, let us put a stop to this. I have done as much, nay even more for many others than I ever did for you, and yet you see they let me live quietly, which you will not do."

"But they were English or Irish!" said Priam. "I tell ye what it is—do a good turn to a Scotsman once, and if he is of the true flint, he will show you by his acts that he has fire in him. So the lang and the short o' this matter is, I hae made up my mind to endure everything ye can say, but steadfastly to fulfil my duty notwithstanding—I will stand by ye, fight for ye, drink for ye, tell lees for ye, and

the like, but the deil be at my foot, if I ever desert you at a strait!"

Walter saw it would be to no purpose to use arguments or even threats to such a person, and without farther discussion he took his hat and gloves, and left Priam in possession of the field—inwardly determining however, if his fortunes did not speedily change, to get rid of his follower in a decided way.

With a slow and almost reluctant step, Walter proceeded along Short-street towards the Mile-end-road, but ere he reached that dusty thoroughfare he paused to look back on the house which was now all that was left to him of a home, and the appearance of the unconscious building disconcerted him like a new calamity.

There has been much said about splendid poverty, elegant misery, and the like; much that is true, no doubt, in its own relation, but very little that is not false, in the common comparison of the condition with poverty of

another kind. There is indeed a sad difference between them. The splendid pauper feels that he can hardly call his rich mansion, his carriages, his wines and plate his own; but then he *does* possess them, and his sufferings are but the *dread* of what the other *endures*—or if secret annoyances which the very ease around him makes him magnify to himself, be supposed to make the malady nearly the same, the one patient is at least well nursed, gently soothed, and so ministered to, that he is only conscious of pain when he leads his mind to it; but the other lies neglected and forlorn, feeling every moment the fulness of agony, with no one to assuage a pang, or to cheer him while he suffers it; no hand to undraw his curtains but that of death! In the one case, it is more a painful thought, than an actual condition; in the other, it is the worst calamity of life, because the one the sense of which is the oftenest renewed. There is no refuge from it; all other wretchedness is matter of sensation,

and has its pauses, but the world has no pause in its persecution of thorough poverty. The splendid poor have galling conditions to submit to at times, but the very poor have them always, see them in every look, meet them in every way, and tenant their solitudes with phantoms, more real than the coward creations of guilt itself.

"'One hundred popular songs for a halfpenny! one hundred elegant songs for a halfpenny!—'We have lived and loved together,' 'The old hoak table,' 'Jim along Josy,' one hundred popular songs for a halfpenny! 'Sweet Jenny Jones,' 'Oh do not turn thy hies away,' 'Appy land, Appy land'—one hundred popular songs for a halfpenny!—only a halfpenny, only a halfpenny—one hundred popular songs!" As the person who said all this, directed a great portion of it to Walter — having probably mistaken the purpose of his standing, the latter passed on, asking himself why a jargon which

he would have smiled at before, saddened him so now.

It was with a sensible degree of relief that after a gloomy walk of nearly an hour, he found himself proceeding along the western end of the Strand; for the associations of the place were more pleasing to him, at least he imagined there was nothing here to add to his dejection. But in this he was mistaken. As he walked on, he came full upon a saddler who was standing at his shop door, looking at one or two leathern portmanteaus which he had just placed there—and with this person Walter had had an account in better days, and had a balance at his debit now. Their recognition was mutual. The tradesman obsequious, but smart — as saddlers, from cultivating something of jockey airs, are apt to be, hoped his honour was well, and begged him to walk in, and look at his novelties. Walter thanked him, but said with some embarrassment, that he was not in want of any thing at present;

and was about to walk on, when the saddler took the liberty of inquiring the name of his hotel. This fairly staggered him; and losing his presence, for it was his first essay on the diplomacy of poverty, he told the tradesman that he was living in lodgings at No 26, Short-street, Mile-end-road. Had a thunderbolt fallen at the saddler's feet, he could not have looked more dismayed; but the pavement of the Strand is a bad place to attempt to detain any one on without a legal warrant for that purpose; and with a polite bow, which the tradesman was taken too much by surprise to return, Walter passed on, hoping in his heart that the industrious tradesman might forget the number of the house, or that he himself, as was very probable, might have made a mistake about it. The incident however made him more heart sick than before—and from a much more legitimate cause.

The scene was lively at the National Gallery—the crowds of coaches—the files of footmen on

the stairs — stout ladies descending from carriages that shook themselves as if with delight of being relieved of their burdens— pretty girls pretending to lean on the arms of gouty patrons of the fine arts, as they moved slowly up the stone stairs together—the highly fed men in distinguished livery looking lethargically at the sweet ones' feet, as with a checked lightness they accommodated their tread to papa's ascending efforts—bustling connoisseurs pushing sideways through the crowd with catalogues in their hands—well dressed loungers climbing the stairs slowly, and evidently more interested with the flesh-and-blood beauty entering the building, than likely to be with its varnished imitations inside — and pale artists moving on timidly, and giving room to every one to pass.

Walter entered the rooms, and the gaudy, motley covered walls, the moving groups, gently jostling on the crowded floors, the graceful quiet of the place—for quiet its general aspect was,

in spite of bright flirting eyes, interjections of greeting, nods, becks and wreathed smiles; to say nothing of the staring colours of so many hundreds of bran new paintings in bran new gilded frames—pleased, cheered, and for the moment made him almost forget his cares and debts, and in a great measure also, the professional purpose of his visit.

Walter was a lover of art,—a person of a naturally good taste quickened and chastened by a sojourn in countries, the very atmosphere of which seems to inspire the imagination with a love for the silent poetry of the artist, to an extent which in this country is rarely known. We have indeed many enthusiastic collectors of paintings, but that can no more be called an enthusiasm for the art, than the wish to enrich the cabinet with the original magna charta, could be construed into a love of liberty. We reward the few richly, but there is no general taste abroad among us to stimulate the aspirations of the many. Hence art in England is

on the whole an indifferent thing, even to most of the connoisseurs, a soulless study learned by rote, their love for it, is for the most part the love which all men feel for a knowledge, which it cost them considerable difficulty to acquire; and their admiration more commonly measured by a pedantic acquaintance with the difficulties which the artist had to overcome, a comparison with pictures, which on account of one solitary excellence had fetched a certain price, a sterile artificial taste, coldly modelled by rules, or a few mangy ideas assisted to fictitious warmth, by the writings of men who take up a picture and preach upon it—rather than resulting from a generous communion with genius looking on nature through a kindred medium that almost makes the painting a vision of its own. All this is improving it is true, but still far from enough, to prevent disappointment to any one who looks for the first time on an exhibition of our national art. Walter felt this now, and as he walked through the rooms

with his ideas glared by the crowd of paintings, or paused to examine some, which had collected groups of gazers to them, the impression was nearly the same. He saw that his task was one of great difficulty, but he set himself to it earnestly, and after a few hours hard work, had examined about twenty of the paintings most worthy of notice. He took a few notes of some of these—marked his catalogue here and there, and began to find an aptness for his strange duty growing upon himself, but he became weary at length, and fairly turned his eyes from many flaring desperately before him, as if appealing to his candour if they were not as deserving of attention as some which he had put upon his list. And candour answered that it was questionable if they were not so, but then what could he do with so many? — he pitied the artists who had obscured themselves in such a throng, pitied himself that he was there in such a capacity, and felt the majesty of luck even in the chances of his own allotment.

God help us all! we injure each other daily, and none more, than the weak do the weak. Here was a man, full of honest benevolence, a man who, had he had the power, would have offered a helping hand to the most neglected artist whose works were there, and yet on the morrow, this self same notice of his, would create heart-burnings to many, and agony to not a few. Not in any thing it would contain, but in that which it would omit—for Walter, tyro as he was in the art which it was his strange lot to exercise, had only unbridled his prospective strictures on those who could afford to bear them—it was the apparent neglect of works on which many hopes had been built, which would give the pain, which even malice itself would scruple to inflict. And here let it be modestly recorded to the honour of that denounced class, the critics of the press, that however much they may be railed at for partiality, or the too ready bestowal of praise, there is almost always a genuine kindness in the

manner in which they exercise their vocation to those who would most suffer from it, were it exerted harshly. And we may be assured—and it is a truth worth knowing too—that when they do in any great number censure, in such cases it generally may be safely reckoned to be just. The word "critic" has lost its snarl, there is even bounty in the term now, and although it is a pity that its character should be often so perverted, it is impossible to contemplate it in the aggregate, without feeling respect for the benevolent spirit which pervades it. Whether this be creditable to our national character, or to human nature itself, it sorts not here to inquire, but the fact is so.

A lady of the dangerous heart-melting age which approaches forty, beautiful as Juno is said to be by the accomplished Pagans who had so many opportunities of judging of the fact, with fine black eyes and something of that quiet but imperial sweep in her progress, by which a quick glance can detect distinction,

even in such crowds as these,—accompanied, or rather indeed attended, by a few very intelligent looking young ladies,—one of whom wore gold spectacles of a light and elegant pattern,—and some persons nearer her own age, of both sexes,—had several times sauntered up and down the room in which Walter had been occupied for the last half hour, and he had remarked, that her eyes had noticed him in a way which was inquisitive, although unexceptionably so. He observed too, that this lady, whoever she was, was spoken to, by such as conversed with her for a moment, with a certain degree of deference—he could perceive this, without hearing a word of what was said—and he also saw that such persons on leaving her, frequently whispered something to others, who again managed to take such a sweeping view of the paintings, as to have an opportunity of looking after her. And here it may be remarked in passing, that pictures in these rooms often serve purposes very different from that

which the artist had in view when he committed them to the society's care. Little does he know the "sweet uses" made of them by many votaries of the art. "Fond man!" his daring flights, his gaudy groupings, nay the whole framed work is often regarded with steadfast admiration, simply because it happens to be deaf.

To Walter's surprise he now heard his own name mentioned, in the tone of one who accosts another, and turning round, perceived Mr. Ganymede Unicorn in full dress, who had been walking through the rooms with his hat in his hand.

"Happy to see you, Mr. Osborne," said the barber, smiling and bowing,—"left us last night rather early—had the pleasure of drinking your health, sir, after you were gone. Fine painting that—that is the portrait of His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. If he had used my extract of cucumbers, sir, he would have had no use for that Roman Catholic scull cap.

But you are surprised no doubt to see me here. The fact is, I am come to have a peep at Johnathan—the artist, at my earnest intreaty, having got me a ticket for the private view; for besides my desire to see how Johnathan would look framed and gilded like a family portrait, I like sir, it may be a weakness, but I confess I *do* like now and then to have a quiet peep at the aristocracy. That is the old Earl of Fritterville entering the room—he looks older though than he is, for he is only ten years and four months older than myself—I remember him with his powdered wig, sir, his long tie and velvet breeches, tripping about at Vauxhall; there wasn't such a gentleman in England for beguiling the ladies—dear dear, didn't he shave them short! and now you see he looks old enough to be my father. My father though was a remarkably handsome man, and my mother kept a circulating library, that's the reason she had me named Ganymede—a name that did me some service, I can tell you, with the

fair sex, when I was young; but doesn't very well suit me now that I'm getting an old man."

"And where is this portrait?"

"There—that large painting opposite."

Walter looked, and saw a painting—something in the style of art of the portrait of the tobacconist in Regent Circus, who is so cheerfully represented in his shop window in full dress, with his wine and grapes, snuff box, and little dog, not to speak of the pocket handkerchief placed artistically on his knee—the family group of a Yorkshire squire, himself, his lady and seven or eight children sitting before a substantial dinner, which however for the purpose of art, not one of them was permitted to touch. "And which of these is the person you mean?"

"Person! my good sir, it's Johnathan Wyld. Don't you know Johnathan? quite a popular character now. Ha! ha! ha! forgive my witticism. Johnathan my bear—there he is, with

Mr. John Hopkins shooting at him from behind a rock."

Walter looked again, and near the family party, who were allowing their dinner to get cold before their eyes, saw a painting of a young man with a round cockney face, dressed like a brigand, shooting at a large bear.

"Isn't it beautiful?" said the barber, watching Walter's look with evident delight. "Johnathan sat, or rather was tied, for his portrait; and it is done to the life. Mr. John is very well too, but he would look more like himself in his natural dress."

"Upon my word, you must have gone to some expence to have your bear painted this way, Mr. Unicorn."

"Not a sixpence, sir. You see, Mr. John was going to have his portrait taken; his father —he is in the linen business—wished him to be taken looking over the invoices, with a pen in his mouth; and his mother again would have him painted sitting under a tree, reading a

poetry book: but none of these struck Mr. John's fancy; and being very fond of pigeon shooting, this style of thing suggested itself to him. But the managers here haven't used me well in the business, for the artist promised me that the painting would appear in the catalogue as 'Forest Scene—Mr. John Hopkins, Junior, shooting at a bear called Johnathan Wyld, the property of Mr. Ganymede Unicorn, Hairdresser, Fleet-street;' but not a word of Johnathan or me is printed, after all the trouble I had. But perhaps now, you could mention it in your notice."

"No," said Walter, "I am afraid I can do nothing with this."

"There! there! do you see that lady who has just passed us?"

"I do," said Walter, observing that he alluded to the lady before mentioned.

"That is Lady Felton, the celebrated literary character."

"I have heard the name," said Walter, look-

ing after her; "she writes novels, does she not?"

"She does, sir. She is a wonderful lady that is—And you don't think then you can say any thing about Johnathan?"

Walter looked at the picture again, and shook his head.

"Well, my time is up, and I must think about returning. We shall see you to-night I hope at the Burleigh. Good-bye, sir," said the barber bowing and gliding away with a light step.

Hardly was the small man gone, when an elaborately dressed, tall young gentleman approached.

"Ah Osborne! how do? Devilish glad to see you. Amusing yourself in a picture gallery as usual?"

Walter held out his hand in some embarrassment, but the next moment detected, in spite of a furosity of whisker, the handsomely insipid countenance of the Honourable Frederick Tow-

zel, a person whom he had slightly known at Cambridge, and played billiards with some months ago in France—the whiskered sprig of nobility being then on his way home from Gibraltar, which he was obliged to leave on account of having severely injured himself with gunpowder. He was a very "fast man," as it is called, and having nearly blown up the fortress, the governor, who was a very slow fellow, had insisted on his absence from his regiment as long as it should be there, which indeed amounted to his incapacity even for the army, a fact by which the intelligent reader will be able to judge of the talents of the man.

"Cold weather, most cursedly raw this dear old country of ours," remarked Mr. Towzel. "Egad, if Athens was not such a deucedly English town now, I almost think——Nay you are not going? Lady Felton wishes me to introduce you to her."

Walter looked surprised at this.

"Why the fact is," resumed Mr. Towzel,

exciting his whiskers, "I believe I am the cause of it. They were speaking of you as I came in, and when I saw who it was, I made bold to say that you knew more about paintings than any man in England—at all events, you know much more about them than I do. So let us join her—we can neither of us get out of it *now*."

CHAPTER III.

In which some matters assume a delicate, and others a dangerous aspect.

Lady Felton was a great lover of art; her enemies indeed affirmed that she was so in more ways than one; and Walter—without perhaps meriting the character in regard to it, which his honourable friend had given him, from an indistinct notion that it might reflect some degree of credit on himself—knew and, as has been already said, admired it more than the major part of those who make it the pet idol of their bustling worship. And when

mutual ceremonials had been paid, and he found himself passing to another room with her ladyship on his arm, followed by Mr. Towzel protecting the young lady with the gold spectacles, he felt a certain lightness of heart, —arising from the momentary influence of the present usurping in his mind the place of both past and future—which enabled him to speak on the common subject which was the presumed topic of the conversation of all present, in a way which pleased his accomplished companion, and perhaps would have charmed her if she had not been too wise now to be charmed with anything.

Not that Lady Felton was altogether *passée*, although she liked to be surrounded by young men. She had only seen thirty six summers, and bore their load lightly. She was in the heyday of that second youth which marriage gives to many of her sex, and she understood her epoch thoroughly. There was no crime in the wish to be surrounded by those who were

better endowed with youth than herself, in the one sex, and by those who could not rival her, in the other; there are many sources of enjoyment to be derived by an intelligent mind from such an habitual arrangement, and Lady Felton understood them all.

Yet she was at what is considered a suspicious period in the lifetime of woman, who has no ties of heart to bind it to family and home; she had no children, her only household god was an old peer whom Pitt had made—very much troubled with gout, and a passion for farming. At that age, when all the ripe passions of woman are in confirmed vigour, nay even startled into more desperate intensity from the perception of personal beauty waning, and the cold region of age freezing the hopes that venture far beyond the present time; at that dangerous age, in which women of weak minds prefer any homage, even that of the serpent, injured as it might be presumed to be, by chronicled experience, which however



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the venture, than it is calculated to give a return for, without the aid of miracles—they enjoy vividly the temporary homage paid them, gather its natural fruits as long as they can, and enjoy them decently; and then see their inconstant votaries now somewhat drawn into the vortex of years, leave them to dally by the side of cold shouldered girls, who calculate the style in which the fortunes of these experienced lovers will enable them to live, while they look lingeringly to younger men, whose advances for the present they repel, with a feeling of genuine regret, that they are not better endowed.

Lady Felton was no fool, although she wrote novels, and paid for their printing at her own expence—all the serpentine deceivers, although twice as gaudily coloured as the glossy beast that charmed away the unsuspecting innocence of our respected mother, whose indiscretion has ruined such an interesting family—might have hissed themselves hoarse ere they had cheated her—she knew better; for why, she

needed no such desperate measure to obtain an insight into life, and as to other knowledge—although she wrote books—she cared not for it a rush. A wise woman, a voluptuously modelled creature, in whose heart even the birds of paradise were kept in cages of iron wire; gilded it is true, but then they could not get out to do her permanent damage. They were there, warm, cherished, and vigorous, but they could not get out. Oh no! she needed no angel to come to the agricultural baron and tell him about that, which when his gouty cough permitted, he might tell to her again; she knew the bleak waste to which an exclusion from the blessings she possessed would expose her, and had no mind to encounter it for the choicest fruit. She knew the penalty of unguarded sin—she held passions, impetuous as they were, by a sure bridle, and knew the road well over which she drove. Had Eve possessed equal prudence, although at the expence of a small portion of that confiding purity which

has ruined us all, and is still ruining many of her daughters particularly, Adam might have trusted her to go a gipsying by herself, though the devil with his whole court, had been glittering in the grass.

Walter was pleased. There is something in the easy association with rank which always pleases those who live in shabby lodgings, let their pride be as richly furnished as it may. He forgot his circumstances—forgot his lodgings and the view from the window—he even forgot for a moment or two that he was poor, and after a lounge of about three quarters of an hour, in the various rooms, during which a lively conversation had been sustained between them, without a moment's flagging, and in the course of which Lady Felton learned that he had been examining the paintings for the Purpose of writing a review of them in a morning paper, which so far from lowering him as he expected in her estimation evidently raised his consideration in her eyes as well as in the spec-

tacled ones of her interesting satellite, and when at last he handed her to her carriage, a neat light chariot drawn by a couple of proud bays chafing on their jingling bits—she told him that she would look with much interest on the following morning for the newspaper he had mentioned, and that she should be happy to see him at Coronet Square.

Bowing and bewildered, he saw the carriage drive off, and found himself alone with Mr. Towzel on the pavement. This would not do at all, so calling a cab he took abrupt leave of his friend—pleading an engagement, and drove to the Old Hummums Hotel, Covent Garden.

This was a place, which, although somewhat beyond his present means, was perhaps the best suited to his purpose which he could have readily fixed on. Here he dined, and in the gentlemanlike repose of the handsome coffee room—in this respect one of the best in London—he sat for about three hours, sipping

a bottle of claret, and preparing a long review of the paintings.

This course of procedure was very pleasant, but hardly proper for a man in his circumstances. But the truth is, his late society had made him loth to seek out the place in which he had dined with Priam Guthrie on the previous day, and he had a great repugnance to going home, to encounter again the sententious prudence of that pragmatical follower. He read over his review—it was written with the modesty of intelligence—it had no Ossian flights, but was a fair report of what he had examined—he was satisfied with it, nay he thought that it was very good. He enclosed it to Mr. Burton, and took it to the Lord Burleigh, then turned his solitary course towards Whitechapel.

And what a change was here! The deserted city was passed easily through, but not so this great eastern thoroughfare. Butchers' shops with gas pipes vomiting flambeau flames wavered over red masses of beef—vagrants,

beggars, ruffians, and the thick scum of all the earth, jostled past him in crowds—the smell, the noise, the darkness brought old thoughts, that carried weight, back upon his mind, and pleased as he had been with himself half an hour ago, he now thought that he had been acting with a folly which was criminal. "I," said he to himself, "I, with a few pounds constituting all my means, and estate, I, living in miserable lodgings, and now in terror even to walk the streets, I, to be flirting with a fashionable lady, dining at an hotel, drinking claret, and lording it like a spendthrift whose worst extravagances only procure him an admonitory letter—it is worse than madness! Guthrie, after all, has more prudence than I, or if a fool his folly is more honourable to him than mine is to me—I must suit my feelings and habits to my condition, bitter as it is. I must do this, and that immediately, otherwise I shall be ruined utterly."

These are sad reflections in any place, but

they are dismal ones in Whitechapel. On, on, he pushed his way, little soothed by amenity of objects in his progress, or gladdened by the hope of pleasure on his arrival. Butchers' boys with empty trays exulted, singing aloud as they passed him, and looking insultingly at the well dressed gentleman, whose clothes would suffer what theirs were exempt from—cabmen with oil cloths on their shoulders, touched their hats as he passed them on the pavement, and informed him of their vocation, in a stealthy tone, then finding he took no notice of them, enjoying the discomposure which he evidently suffered at the desperate humour of ill clad urchins who as they went splashing past him, screamed up in his face. Omnibusses shot madly by, but he now trudged on in a misanthropic mood, which self-love made him fancy was philosophy. It was a philosophy however without honour—a combat without glory; a state of mind less akin to endurance than despair.

He found Priam waiting for him, and his room as cheerful looking as a bright fire and closed shutters could make it. By the time he had changed his wet clothes for others, which Priam had ready aired, tea appeared on his tottering table, and when he had finished his slight meal, Mr. Guthrie, who had evidently waited for its conclusion, drew out two letters from under the hearth rug, and presented them to him without saying a word. His surprise vanished when he read their contents. One was from the saddler whom he had seen in the Strand, requesting payment of the balance of his account enclosed, amounting to seventeen pounds eight shillings and eleven pence, adding that as he had a heavy payment to make on the following day he should feel obliged by receiving the amount before twelve o'clock, the epistle closing shortly, without the usual peroration of hoping for a continuance of his favours. The other letter was to the same effect, and nearly in the same words, with the

exception of the difference of amount which was ten pounds more than the other—and an intimation that the writer would be polite enough, to send a person early on the following morning to receive the sum. This letter was from a gunsmith, to whom the saddler had, in the course of the day, inadvertently communicated the residence and rising condition of their common customer—and the gunsmith who was a very active man of business, and accustomed to desperate debts, had resolved to steal a march upon the other, by sending one of his men to get what could be got first.

Walter was much staggered at these requests, particularly at the prospect of being dunned personally on the following morning, and handed the two letters to Priam in the same silent way as he had received them from him.

"How lang have ye dealt wi' thae gentry?" demanded Mr Guthrie, after he had read the letters through and glanced over the bills.

"For several years," answered Walter.

"And paid them now and then?"

"Of course I have paid them often—in that time I must have paid them both large sums of money. How many men did I equip in our troop nearly at my own expence?"

"Then you don't owe them morally speaking a bawbee," said Priam decisively, "so my conscience will be easy in assisting you to elude them."

"But I have no wish to elude them," said Walter, "both the debts I dare say are just enough, although I cannot pay them."

"It might be an honest kindness to baith their consciences to thwart them in their endeavours to be paid though," remarked Priam. "If a man like you, has paid a London tradesman three times out of four, ye may tak' my word for't he has had his principal and interest baith. But that's no' the present difficulty—a matter o' conscience we could put aff for further consideration, but a bum baillie generally requires prompt attention. Let me see—

Heaven defend us frae writs! if *they* come on us, we shall hae to pay every thing down on the nail, for our landlady, worthy woman, then wad na gie us a day's credit. Do ye ken," said Priam, first going on tiptoe to the door and putting his ear to it—"do ye ken, that she thinks me as rich as a Jew, and as saving as Daniel Dancer; if she ken't the *real* state o' my finances, I verily believe she wad turn me out o' the house. But," continued Priam going to the door again, and listening for a moment or two with deep gravity, "she has a design upon me!—tells me she has low spirits, and twa dizzen o' silver spoons,—

"'Draw the swurd, Scotland, Scotland.'"—

"Hold your tongue!" interrupted Walter passionately, "and don't make a fool of yourself at a time like this. What in the world are we to do?"

"Even this," answered Priam, "if thae creditors o' yours persevere, we maun shift our

quarters. Landladies are but women in a' parts of London."

"I shall have to shift my quarters I dare say," said Walter, "but I see no reason for your doing so."

"That subject, with submission, I should think is exhausted now," said Priam. "I shall meet this person in the morning,—a soft answer turneth awa' wrath, but it never turns awa' a creditor—yet for a' that, I may mak' something o' him. At ony rate they canna' arrest ye without passing through the ceremony o' the courts—and that will gie us time to look about us."

"It is very wretched all this," exclaimed Walter, walking up and down the room in impatient unhappiness. "Poverty is bad enough, but with debt added to it, it is more than one can bear. Bring me my meerchaum, and let me be alone!"

CHAPTER IV.

How Walter Osborne cultivates an acquaintance of a precarious kind.

NEXT morning Walter was gratified by seeing himself for the first time in print. The paper had inserted his review, and as he read it, half dressed, he was so much pleased with it that it gave him a degree of pleasure, which almost amounted to happiness. He made no inquiry regarding his promised visitor, but breakfasted silently, with the large, damp newspaper before him. He dismissed Priam, for he had no wish to hear anything which that gentle-

man might have to say, dressed with some care, and set out to visit Lady Felton.

On arriving at Coronet-square, Walter perceived that the porter, the moment he glanced at his card, became impressed with a degree of respect which he had not at first shown—it was quickly handed to a lackey who was passing through the hall, and Walter found himself in a quiet room, which a silky eared, delicate looking, Blenheim spaniel had chosen for his repose, and which he was now enjoying on a sofa, at a corner conveniently out of the line of the window light. The small brute gave himself the trouble to raise his head on Osborne's entrance, looked at him for a moment with the easy composure with which a stranger is regarded in a May Fair drawing room by the habituées of the place, then relapsed into indifference and repose. A large mirror on the opposite wall,—embanked by drooping curtains, under the shadows of which it looked so pure, so liquidly bright, that it struck the eye,

whether one had a wish to look on a glass or no,—showed Walter his own reflection, and accounted for the momentary coldness of the porter, to a person who had the air and dress of a gentleman. Walter perceived that there was a certain melancholy in the expression of his countenance—a pale cheek, a wistfulness of eye, and even something of dejection in his carriage, which to the sharp eyes of the practised warder, might have appeared indicative of a class, which the instincts of his nature, and the duties of his office, alike inclined him to treat with measured courtesy.

He was interrupted in the comfortless reflections which this idea gave rise to, by the entrance of a servant, who came to conduct him to Lady Felton, He found her seated in a room, the appearance of which struck him nearly as much as her own. It was a dark day, and the light that shone through the curtains of the tall, narrow window, would have left the place in comparative obscurity, had not the

subdued beams blended with the soft haze of a frosted lamp, that hung from the ceiling by a massive gilded chain; the walls were covered with silk hangings, mirrors, books lightly pressed together in long, richly lined cases, with broad edges inlaid with tortoishell and silver—and pictures of old masters, hardy in design, but so exquisite in their lifelike execution, that bashfulness itself would not have blushed at them: vases, mosaic cabinets, ottomans of tapestry work, mingled together in negligent harmony—before her lay books and papers amid the rich *bijouterie* which takes from study its ascetic air—there was a luxurious indolence in the very atmosphere of the room which stole upon the senses—the tones of the voice which now fell on his ear,—the objects that pleased the eyes—the stillness—the sweet langour to which the imagination abandoned itself, made Walter feel for the moment, as if he had entered a new world.

And she who sat there, was even more cal-

culated to create such an influence. She hardly seemed the same person he had seen yesterday, so different is the portrait when one sits for it, to that which Daguerotypes it in a crowd. She wore a loose morning gown which revealed the outline of a graceful figure—the bare neck was white and voluptuous, the mouth instinct with a beauty, which but for the pride which mingled with it, would have merited a warmer name—the eyes black and full, and *so* full of silent intelligence that they might have suggested an element in that question of fascination about which grave men have controversies at the present day,—but this expression also was chastened by a forehead lofty and intellectual, and which preserved its character in spite of the rich clusters of coal-black hair that fell around it—the hands, that pretty feature in woman, were perfect, so much so that they looked as if rings would mar their symmetry; she wore none, but the small gold hoop, that

badge of freedom, which women of all conditions delight to wear.

She received him cordially, complimented on the taste which he had displayed in the review of the paintings, conversed again on the subject of the art, and directed his attention to those in the room. When the merits of these had been sufficiently discussed, she spoke of literature, but, considerably to Walter's relief, said nothing of her own works, productions with which he happened to be unacquainted, although he paid her back her compliments on the score of these. She told him that she was engaged in writing the Memoirs of a celebrated "favourite," of a celebrated French monarch. Walter imagined it was some of his marshalls, and was somewhat surprised that a lady should have undertaken such a task, but his surprise was redoubled when he discovered it to be one of the most abandoned of his mistresses. Now although he remembered the extremely candid and in-

telligent character of the reigning taste, as well as many works of doubtful conclusions, written by ladies who had suffered nothing in the estimation of society, by having directed their talents to such matters, still it is one thing to *read* such writings by a lady, and another thing to hear her *speak* of such matters. Lady Felton saw nothing of this, she took up the manuscript, mentioned some particulars which she was in doubt whether to insert or omit, and ended by requesting him to look over what she had written, and, if he could find leisure, to bring it back to her on the following day, when she would be happy to hear any suggestions regarding it which he might do her the favour to make.

On the whole, the interview was a most agreeable one to Walter. The society of a beautiful and accomplished woman, the luxury around him, the elegant seclusion, the very region in which he was, all forming such a contrast to his condition elsewhere, made him forget

for the time, what his real circumstances were, and when he left the house, and passed to the street again, it was with feelings like those of one who is suddenly awakened from a pleasant dream.

He spent that evening in revising the manuscript, with which he had been intrusted, and on the following day, was with her ladyship again. She was pleased with his suggestions, so much so that she found more employment for him of a similar kind, and he became at length almost a daily visitor.

Now there is no ordinary intercourse which so soon makes people of different sexes on intimate terms with each other as a literary one. There is a trifling with grave matters connected with it, a call as it were on the experiences of each other in relation to the mysteries of that feeling which forms so large a province of our popular literature—which gradually destroys reserve, and disposes the passions to a com-

munion which is and ever must a dangerous one.

Walter became fascinated with her society. He spent a great part of his mornings in her drawing rooms, or when they were alone together, in her boudoir. He forgot the pressing nature of his own circumstances, he wished to forget them, for he saw no means of relieving them, and he desperately resolved to be happy while he might. A host of wise men's sayings supported him in this. There is something also in the communion with the wealthy and great, calculated to lead to blind unconcern of difficulties, and Walter was in that state of mind which makes us adopt any means of being for a while at rest, from thoughts which, however just, lead to no other conclusion than that of making us more acutely wretched than we were before. "It is better," thought he — or acted as if he thought so, "to endure the dulness of pain, than submit to the agony of a probe which can

in no way lead to arresting consequences, which it will only tell me of with more distinctness, than I wish to know.

He had received a few guineas for his review of the paintings, but Mr. Burton had in vain endeavoured to procure him any other employment on the press. Time passed rapidly, and Walter, as his circumstances grew daily more desperate, found his only happiness in being at Lady Felton's. She saw the interest she had inspired, and it gratified her; a woman, she was fond of conquest, and being in all domestic relations, listless of heart, she was happy at the thought of being loved. She had taken more than ordinary pains to inspire him with that spirit of homage which to receive, although dangerous, is still within the confines of honour, it was a bauble which she trifled with, but would perhaps have blushed to think of as an object which engrossed her mind.

Walter was handsome and accomplished, she

saw that his character had the ardour of sincerity, and the feeling, whatever name it may deserve, with which she had inspired him, was one which gratified her and which she wished to preserve.

But it is sometimes easier to make an impression on others than to prevent ourselves from being influenced by it to an extent not reckoned, if not to an equal degree.

Success is proverbially an intoxicating thing, and intoxication with all its drawbacks, has some honest qualities about it. Many a one has been seriously burnt by the flames which they have kindled with love's torch, from mere wantonness, or it may be even a worse motive, in another, and have found themselves at last in the higher conflagration of the two. And this law of love's nature has protected more of its frailer votaries, than our nobler sex is willing to acknowledge. Purity, honest confidence, and genuine love; even heart pique, when the settled object has been the easy ruin of a worthlessly

accounted victim, has often turned the tables in the matter of weakness, and made an unconscious tyrant in the slave. But this is a truth which carries no precept, and it is needless to insist upon it here. Certain it is however, that Lady Felton began to discover that she was now and then uneasy when Walter did not call,—to imagine that she had judged hastily of his attachment, that the melancholy which she had at times perceived, had arisen from causes unconnected with her,—and these discoveries disturbed her.

One afternoon as they sat together on the same ottoman, alone in the silent suite of rooms conversing regarding a love scene in these very memoirs which she was engaged in writing, Walter ventured to observe that he thought there was more *abandonment* in it than ought to pass from under a lady's hand. She replied in a sudden tone of feeling, that it was only woman who could appreciate love without wary cavillings at its power. "All the faults we

suffer for," said she passionately, "all the greatness we seek, all the happiness we ask for on earth, is through love, and love alone. With your sex it is different—it is a state which they know, and feel, but never *share*."

"It may be," said Walter, "they have more doubt on the venture, but I do not see that their interest in it is not the same."

"Their risk is less," said the lady, "infinitely so; it is a cold policy then which makes the doubt greater. But it is not that. Men risk what is dear to them on bolder hazards, but the relations of the heart call forth all the world's proverbs at once. There is more honesty in the creed which makes woman a slave, than in the boasted chivalry which makes her a goddess. The homage offered to her has selfish reckonings—it is a worship in which passion is but gratitude for blindfold preference or reckless trust, or more frequently one in which prudence has read its dues at the altar's foot. With your sex, it is deemed folly else."

"Love is the dearest blessing of life," said Walter, unconscious of the tone of feeling in which he spoke, "although it may be the most perverted one. But it is the iron hand of circumstances, and not its own nature which occasions this, wherever it has been cherished thoroughly."

Lady Felton did not reply for a moment or two—her small foot trembled as it pressed the yielding cushion on which it lay, her breathing was quick and anxious, and in spite of her efforts, neither the restless heavings of her bosom nor the rapid flushes that rose and fell again on her cheek, could for a time be subdued. These passed away at length, but it was in a tone of voice different from any which Walter had hitherto heard her utter, that she now remarked as she slightly raised her fine figure from its drooping attitude.—"Love is a poisoned toy to dally with, if it be the world's blessing, it is our sex's bane."

"Not theirs alone," said Walter as he now rose to take leave, more disturbed than he ever

yet had been in her presence, "not theirs alone!"

He took her hand, it clasped his; slightly but still it was a clasp. Her cheek was flushed—her eyes had an expression that made his heart beat thickly—her hand was not withdrawn, still he almost unconsciously held it, until he felt its very pulses strike upon his own.

And so they parted dizzily.

CHAPTER VI.

How Walter Osborne becomes visited by writs, and receives important intelligence in fashionable society.

Lord Felton came to London. He was a stout, stiff-kneed man, with iron-grey hair, a port-wine complexion, and a justice-of-the-peace expression of countenance. His highest ambition, at least that of an active kind, was to be considered a good county man, and a good county man he might be supposed to be, being never happy when out of it, which he seldom was, when he could avoid it. He knew little, and cared less about his wife's circle of ac-

quaintance—he had few friends of his own rank, but he knew every farmer within ten miles round his house; his bosom friends and companions being one or two country gentlemen of the neighbourhood, an old medical practitioner who he fancied understood his habit of body and the nature and care of all his diseases, and the parish clergyman, who from some unintelligible cause called himself his chaplain. Some of these generally dined with him, flustered themselves about politics, for which none of them cared a straw, quarrelled now and then, and made it up again.

His lordship treated every body whom he met in his house in London with civil indifference, with the exception of one or two dinner-eaters, who were never seen there except when he was in town; but in all other respects, things went on with her unfettered ladyship exactly as before. Her drawing rooms were filled with the same sort of guests, she drove through her own routine of visits, had her opera box pre-

pared for the approaching season, and busied herself in arranging her new work for the press.

Perhaps the occasion of the worthy peer's coming to town was a party which she was about to give, and to which in all probability he had been invited. Walter also had been so, and on the morning of the day on which it was to take place, he also received an invitation to appear in one of His Majesty's Courts at Westminster, and have a little conversation with the saddler, and just as he was entering the cab, a similar invitation was put in his hands by a tall spectral looking man, in a drab great coat —at the instance of the gunsmith. But matters were now come to that state at which the future can hardly be rendered blacker in prospective, than it already is, so taking the copy of the writ, he thanked the bearer politely, and putting it into his waistcoat pocket, got into the cab, and drove to Coronet Square.

Carriage after carriage was arriving at the

lighted door, from various parts of London, but perhaps Walter's was the only one which had come from the Mile-end road. He passed through the hall now filled with servants, and blazing with lights, and entered the suite of rooms. What a contrast the whole formed to the poor chamber he had left! The moving groups, the trembling tapers, the hum of conversation, the seated dowagers, with their hoarded jewels sparkling painfully against aspects which nothing now but the quiet graces of age could adorn,—fair girls, some actively enjoying the scene, and others shrinking from it,—grave men standing as if their being there, was the result of an unfortunate accident, rather than the invitation to an entertainment— some talking, laughing, and smiling together, and others whispering as people do at a solemnity; the accomplished hostess, in spite of the youth and loveliness around her, appearing the presiding genius of the scene, and that too without an effort, while her agri-

cultural lord, in a badly made blue coat with clear buttons, and some melancholy looking foreign order stuck upon it, was doing his best to endure the tedium of the place, and offering his gold snuff box to such as seemed as much out of their element, as he was himself.

Lady Felton received Walter with her wonted ease and kindness; peers, statesmen, authors, and soldiers of name, — wits with handsome slips of nobility catching their sayings; and wealthy men who despised such things; were all around Walter now — how treacherous that momentary equality was! how different would his position be, compared with theirs, when to-morrow had scattered the crowd! These reflections pressed on him even there, and he fell back to look on the scene, rather than to share it.

It was worth looking at, better indeed as an exhibition, than as a thing to give much pleasure to the well dressed actors on its stage. There were many suns of other circles in con-

stellation there, but the great were in congress and without their courts—and it was greatness of a composite order, for the gay gathering was taken pretty equally from the quieter circles of fashion and the cotaries, with a fair sprinkling of oddities to relieve the tedium of the crowd. There was no want of lions, but the lions were not lionised, for Lady Felton, accustoming herself to be courted and caressed in society, had no genius for becoming a worshipper in such idolatry. Hence there was no prevailing tone of class, and even few isolated points of overshadowing distinction; such homage was indeed paid, but it was in smaller circles, and did not affect the spirit of the common sphere.

There was one of these however at no great distance from the place of comparative retreat which Walter had chosen. It was a person conversing shortly, with one or two intelligent looking gentlemen, apparently about his own age. He also attracted an occasional sauntering courtier, whom however he generally drove

very soon away, evidently by some dry remark which nipped their homage in the bud. He was a stout short man with a cynical aspect, dressed in black, his sturdy little legs surmounted by knee buckles, and the top of his watch-pocket (with a strong, gold chain suspending seals, and a small, steel key hanging over it) somewhat further below the waistcoat, than fastidious decency might have admired. Walter recollected the face as belonging to a Doctor Prosody, an eminent classic whom he had occasionally seen at Cambridge. He was a person who was supposed to have more Greek in him than any man living, and had laboured himself into reputation and a bearish temper by tearing up, classifying, cultivating and performing other horticultural offices for the roots of that language. Walter was somewhat surprised to see him here, forgetting that a salon of a lady of talent, like the table of a colonial governor, has always places for heads of departments, no matter of what.

A strong looking man with black whiskers, and wearing the star of the Garter, approached the doctor with another gentleman, who seemed to be known to him. "The Duke of" (Walter did not catch the name) said this latter, introducing this highest order of heraldry and acadamics to each other. The peer bowed gracefully, the doctor less so, giving at the same time the handkerchief he happened to have in his hand a slight twist, as if it would have given him pleasure to wring the neck of his acquaintance, for bringing a duke upon him.

"I had the honour of dining with a friend of yours, the other day, doctor," said the peer. "The Duke of (mentioning one of the royal dukes). He told me he had the pleasure of being acquainted with you."

"All his brag—" said the Doctor dryly.

The peer see-sawed himself slightly for a moment in some confusion, smiled faintly, rubbed the palms of his gloves together, bowed,

and left the sturdy Grecian statue to speak in monosylables with its kindred marble.

Two thin gentlemen in white neckcloths, with opera hats under their arms, who were standing before Walter, as stiff as hedgestakes, had looked on this scene with some interest; and no sooner was the duke gone than one of them remarked,—

"That is the Duke of Kenmore, is it not?"

"It is," said the other.

"Is not he the man, that that pretty girl Brandon jilted sometime ago?" inquired the first speaker.

"The same, the same," nodded his companion, "that story in the papers, about her going off with a benedict, was one of the best lies of the season. It was with Sir Edmund Arden's aunt, the widow of old General Arden; and although it seems Sir Edmund was of the party, his time was not come then. But now that his wife his dead, he will have the game

in his own hands. She has a snug estate somewhere in ——shire, and Arden wants money as much as I do. Besides, I understand he has long been secretly enamoured of the lady, and he is a man to carry his point. He is now down with them somewhere in Scotland, where the old lady has carried her protegée until she becomes of age, which will be in a month or two. But the story is getting stale."

Walter's brain spun round, and he felt a sudden sickness of heart, which made the air of the room oppressive. For the first time, since his acquaintance with Lady Felton, the recollection of her name, in connection with that affair, rushed upon his mind. He became faint, a weight seemed to press on his temples —he could remain no longer where he was, and determined to leave the house. But no sooner had he resolved on this, than he perceived the Honourable Mr. Towzel approaching by the only avenue, that led to the door.

A sight of Doctor Prosody however brought him to a stand. "A—a—ah doc—tor!" said he, holding out his hand, to which the party accosted vouchsafed two fingers—"how are you?"

The doctor looked at him, but did not say anything at all.

"I have come back you see, doctor—sold out—and am going to rub up my Greek again—got myself almost blown up with gunpowder at Gibraltar." "Egad," added Mr. Towzel, making his right heel and toe tap the floor alternately, "they made a great sacrifice of the talent of the family, when they sent me out there."

"Yes," said the doctor, taking out his watch, "you were sent out a sacrifice and have come back a burnt-offering."

"Um—ah," muttered Mr. Towzel, turning away, and to Walter's relief seeking another quarter of the suite of rooms.

Walter passed into the street. The square

was dark and silent, the pavement damp, and the air cold and foggy. He walked on, hardly knowing or caring whither he went. He saw lights at the long windows of the rich mansions around him, and carriages waiting at their doors—still he walked on, heedless of the small dewy rain that fell thick and silently, through a chain of wide quiet streets, and secluded squares. The appearance of the region brought home his own condition to him bitterly, and he felt that he had been acting a madman's part, in mingling, although unobtrusively, in the festivities of those with whom his fortunes gave him no place. It seemed as if he had played something of the part of an impostor, in joining the circle he had done to night.

And these feelings produced others and more painful ones. What mattered it—now if Katherine Brandon should become the bride of Sir Edmund Arden or of another—his, his reason told him, it was vain for him to hope she could ever be; pure and stainless he now readily

she was—and he was surprised and mortified with himself at the faint pleasure which this knowledge gave him. To him he felt she was lost for ever. Nay the conviction which restored her again to his imagination, bright and pure as she had formerly appeared there, only increased his wretchedness, by magnifying the value of the prize he had lost. He had built his hopes on sand—on the early and undeclared love of one, whom fortune would surround with fitter lovers than such as he.

Nay, supposing that she loved him still, it would only render his regret less poignant, or it might be even severer,—for his pride would revolt at an union, in which her love would be her bounty, instead of her pride. The dearest wish of his heart ever had been to raise her above other women, and he never could bear to be raised from the dust by her. To attain this wish, he had ventured all, and lost all, the hazard was made fairly,—the result called for fortitude, instead of joy; and it was unmanly

to bewail it more. It was a bitter lesson, and wisdom had many apothegms to show why he had failed, but none to show how now he could succeed. Hope still was strong as it ever is at twenty-five, and he felt that undetermined certainty which youth always feels of one day succeeding in life, but years and age might creep upon him ere then. The stern realities of his condition pressed upon him, his dearly purchased knowledge of life mocked the truant hopes his heart fain would cling to still, and he resolved to banish them from his mind for ever.

Wet, weary, and ill at ease, he got into a cab, he knew not where, and drove home to his miserable lodgings, to dream of greater misery, or of other and happier days.

CHAPTER VII.

How Walter's circumstances reach a climax, and he engages himself in an humble capacity.

THE last evening had awakened Walter to a vivid sense of his condition. It was too late now to make it matter of contemplation, and extract moments of hood-winked quiet from the temporary absence of consequences, which reason, when allowed to exercise its powers, ever told him were inevitable—in spite of other thoughts; the question of daily bread crept closely on him, and the days for dalliance with reflection were at an end. His few remaining pounds

had dwindled to units, and serious thought could be no longer procrastinated. When the end was farther off, when he had still some time, if nothing else, between him and utter ruin, it was pleasant enough to spend his mornings conversing with a beautiful woman, about painting, literature, and love; but now it was too late for that—it almost ceased to fascinate him, its charm at the best had been more dependent on its oblivious qualities, than on any abiding satisfaction which it produced; and his circumstances and feelings alike, now called upon him to abandon it.

He wrote to Lady Felton—he was in the occasional habit of corresponding with her,—intimated in the best way he could, the necessity he was under of discontinuing his visits; covering the seeming anomaly by professions of regard.

"In the best way he could:" let not these words be read too harshly. Walter had lived in countries where love passages

are more loosely guided, than in their acknowledged relations in our own decorous land; it may be he had been influenced by them more than a healthy state of morals warranted; but his heart was English still. It was a matter of tact—so he considered it, and most justly too, as regarded the *subject* of its application—to throw the necessity of absence rather on feelings, than on circumstances—at all events, whatever the fault was, it was one which he was doomed to suffer for.

Her ladyship heard of his proposed defection with surprise, curiosity, and regret;—she had become accustomed to his society—his manners pleased, his talents had charmed, and his character interested her:—there was a mystery about him, which, she could not solve; and a melancholy, the cause of which she would have given much to know.

Besides, he was precisely the sort of person which, as an authoress, she liked to have about her. He was no "whiskered Pandour," whose

continued society would be worse than useless, no sentimental younger brother, who knew all her friends; he was a stranger, a man of spirit and education, talented enough to be an useful companion in the study, and handsome and gentlemanlike enough, to do no discredit to her drawing rooms.

But after all, Lady Felton, as before mentioned, was not a person to regret such a loss in any unseemly fashion. She only regarded Walter as a person whose society ministered to her pleasure, and she regretted his withdrawal, simply as it would deprive her of that pleasure, and in no more romantic way. Her's were passions of the hour, warm and full of tenderness while they endured; but leaving no permanent impression on the affections, to disturb the mind violently when their objects was removed. She had lived long enough to endure disappointments decently, even those of which her sex are proverbially impatient under.

During all this time, Mr. Priam Guthrie had

been driven almost mad, at witnessing the course of extravagance in which his master indulged. Instead of making any effort to obtain some appointment, through the influence of his new friends, he had spent his time trifling with them about follies, and his money in cabs, gloves, cravats, and other vanities. Priam had indeed had great hopes, when he first heard that Walter was in the habit of visiting at the house of a peer of the realm, and had ventured to buy a decent pair of trousers for himself on the strength of it; and it was with a dismay which for a moment or two deprived him of the power of utterance, that he heard Walter one morning say, that his visits there, were at an end.

"And what do you propose to do now?" inquired Priam.

"Upon my word I cannot think of any thing Guthrie," said Walter.

"And the writs?" suggested Priam.

"I suppose I shall be arrested," remarked

his master with philosophical composure taking his hat and leaving the house.

"He is mad! horn mad!" muttered Priam, as he prepared to follow him. He did so, keeping however at such a distance as to prevent being observed. But on reaching the end of the street, Walter called a cab, and ere Priam could recover from his surprise at such an extravagance, he had entered it and driven away. Mr. Guthrie stood for some moments aghast, then turned short round, and entered the baker's shop in a paroxysm of despair.

Meanwhile Walter drove to the Lord Burleigh, in the forlorn hope of hearing of something from Mr. Burton. On arriving there, he found nobody in the parlour but a stray farmer, who was waiting for a cattle dealer from Smithfield, and endeavouring to keep himself from dejection, by drumming on the table. The whole establishment appeared in something of a torpid state, as it generally was, at that period of the day. The pretty barmaid complained of

being unwell; Antony was gliding about in a state of comparative somnambulency, the landlady had gone to call on Doctor Antioch, and the landlord was breathing heavily in his own room.

"Mr. Burton is not here, Mary?" said Walter, addressing the barmaid.

"He will be here in a few minutes," said Mary, looking at the clock. "He always steps in about twelve, for a quarter of an hour or so. Come this way, and sit here till then," continued the fair disposer of spirits, inviting him into the little bar parlour, opening the door, and placing a chair for him near the fire—then shutting the door again with an exclusive bang, and taking seat near him.

"I have been so ill, Mr. Osborne," said Mary, putting her well shaped hand to her forehead—"so very ill for the last few weeks. "It's over excitement, I know it is."

"You'll get better soon, I dare say," said Walter, more cavalierly than the language of consolation is supposed to allow.

"I may be worse," said Mary thought-

fully, resting one foot, as lightly as Taglioni could have done, on the edge of the fender, and crossing her legs, making the other little foot toy with the warmth in a way which was very pleasant to behold. "Ah you men, you men!" sighed Mary.

"What is going wrong with you?" demanded Walter, looking at her with some interest.

"I have had a great deal to worrit me first and last," said Mary, with an impressive sigh. "I don't mind telling *you*, but I thought six months ago I should have been a married woman by now. I kept company with a young man for two years, we had been engaged all that time, but he met with one who had got a little money, and so he broke off the engagement with me. I think it was rather rude?"

"It was indeed," said Walter.

"And yet," said Mary, with femenine weakness, "he was such a handsome fellow! Do you know," she added, in a tone of pensive confidence, "when first I saw you, I thought there was a likeness. He is a master butcher."

"Humph!" muttered Walter, swinging backwards in his chair.

"He was quite the gentleman though," continued the pretty barmaid, who was quick witted enough to perceive, that she had paid the handsome stranger a compliment, which he did not relish. "Oh, here is Mr. Burton!" said Mary, peevishly.

"Any body in the parlour, Mary, my love," said that gentleman, looking in at the bar. "Ah! 'when lovely woman stoops to folly.' Cold water you jade? when did you ever see me drink hot water in the forenoon? How are you."

"Where are you going, Mr. Burton?"

"Going, Sir! going to a coroner's inquest. A yonng man shot himself this morning all for love; so the thing will tell—and to-morrow I have a similar job: an old half-pay officer hanged himself to day, somewhere about Blackheath. The unhappy man had seven daughters, and seventy pounds a year. But where have

you hid yourself for the last three weeks? That flirty faced Scotchman of yours had taken a vow at the altar of Non-Intrusion, that I should not intrush upon you. The case bottle, Mary! My score is not up to the British brandy point yet."

Declining Mr. Burton's request to partake of spirits and water, Walter waited till the other had drank at the bar what he had ordered, and then accompanied Mr. Burton to the parlour, where the farmer had gone to sleep.

Walter frankly told his friend what his real circumstances were.

"There is no time for trifling now," said Pontius gravely, "you really must do something."

"But what can I do?" demanded Walter.

"Let me see—can you teach anything?"

"Nothing in the world. Stay, I know something of fencing."

Mr. Burton shook his head.

"I have been reckoned a good shot."

"That is a very useless accomplishment, except in His Majesty's service."

"I know something of gunnery and fortification."

"All very well in their way—but not of any available service in these quiet times. Have you no manuscript by you?—no prize essay?—nothing of that sort, although *that* is but a forlorn hope too. But you took honours at Cambridge."

"The only prize I ever got for composition, was when I was a boy of twelve, when I was the only one of my class that succeeded in writing an 'Ode to spring,' presented by Doctor Birchroot. I will repeat it to you, and you may judge of it yourself.

ODE TO SPRING.

In Spring the Caterpillars come out,
And knock the cabbages about;
And eleven hundred of these insects in an hour,
I'm told are able to eat up a whole cauliflower.

"A very lively piece of composition indeed," remarked Pontius. "But you must know something of mathematics."

"I *did* know something of mathematics once certainly, but I have forgotten all about them now."

"No matter for that, if you knew them once, you will be able to teach them. Now a days, the principle is, to teach first, and know a little yourself afterwards."

"Well perhaps with a little rubbing up, I might teach the less ambitious parts of mathematics," said Walter desperately, "and what then?"

"Why since that is the case, I believe I know of something to your advantage. Had you come here oftener of late, you would have heard that Mr. Buckhurst, whom one would think was persecuted not only for his own sins, but also for those of his congregation, had fallen into trouble again.

"What has happened to him now?"

"He has been informed against for furious driving, running down two mutes, overturning a hearse, and then carrying his passengers at a

gallop, a couple of miles out of their way—to escape the police."

"I am sorry to hear that, and what is he doing now?"

"Why nothing; but, he along with Monsieur Pompadour, have this very day engaged themselves as teachers in an academy. It seems the ushers all mutinied against the master on some question connected with beer, and he has been obliged to come to London in all haste to get others. Pompadour heard of it, and engaged himself as French teacher. Buckhurst goes down as classical master. Now if you would take the mathematics, the triumvirate would be complete."

"I suppose there is no alternative. If I remain in London, I shall certainly be arrested, and the dog life of an usher is better than a jail. Where is this schoolmaster to be found."

"He is just now at a tavern hard by, concluding matters with his two new assistants.

It is not ten minutes walk from here—let us go there at once."

They did so, and matters were speedily adjusted, the more readily so, that Walter made no difficulty on the point of salary, which was thirty pounds a year; and the schoolmaster was anxious to return that afternoon, by a coach which was on the point of starting from the inn.

A new difficulty now presented itself to Walter, that was, what he was to do with Priam Guthrie? To take him with him was impossible, and he well knew that Priam would never consent to be left behind. It would however be out of the question for an usher at a salary of thirty pounds a year, to have a body servant, besides it would be doing Priam himself, who was too obstinate and self conceited to be guided in the matter, a serious injury. He at length resolved on sending Priam out of the way, and making his escape in his absence, at the same time leaving such

part of his small means as he could spare, with a letter intreating him to endeavour to find more rational employment, and no longer invite ruin to himself, by clinging to a drowning man. It was also agreed, that for this purpose, Priam should be sent down to Blackheath, with a letter to Mr. Burton.

Walter spent the evening with his motley friends at the Lord Burleigh, and went home at rather a late hour, anxious to find refuge in sleep, from thoughts which forced themselves upon his mind, with a painful reality now, which reason itself was almost unable to bear.

CHAPTER VIII.

In which Walter Osborne takes leave of Lucy Wrey.

It was with some degree of self-reproach, that Walter on the following morning remembered that he had not visited Mrs. Wrey and her daughter, since the day immediately succeeding his return to London. There was just time for him to do so now, as the coach, which was to take him to his new sphere of duties, did not leave town till one o'clock; so after a hasty breakfast, he left the house, took a cab, and drove to the widow's residence.

He entered the little shop. It had been opened hours ago—all was neat and scanty there. The drawings protected by tissue paper, the fancy work carefully arranged, the flimsy elegancies that required patience and toil, and which, trifling as they were, had to procure the price of bread, were neatly and thinly placed as before. They were the work of one poor girl, and she was there alone; and had been there, since the red sun shone through the London mists, at an hour when many of the humblest sleep. There she was, in the same chair, in the same attitude as before—changes had come to him, bitter indeed, but with something of the excitement of hope in them all—but Lucy's condition was still the same. Her forehead was still as smooth and fair, the hair as rich and soft, and the lips as beautiful as ever; nay even the slight figure in its modest dress, the dark grey eyes so soft and patient, the small toiling hands, and the guise of gentle meekness were still the same; but on the pale cheek

though unshadowed yet by a haggard line a quick flush burned at times. It heightened the quiet beauty of her countenance, and made her soft eyes brighter then than it was their wont to be; her mother observed it, and said Lucy worked too much—but then she could not do what Lucy did, she could save, and make the most of things, but Lucy alone could earn. And she would force her child to go out to walk towards what had the look of fields; and Lucy would take her bonnet as she was desired, but so listlessly, and then return so pale, so fatigued, that the good woman was vexed in her heart to see it, and would frettingly tell her, as usual, that she was not like her, when *she* was young. She ought to be cheerful and happy at her age, she was not quite twenty yet, it was too soon to become unhappy—it was so indeed, but Lucy felt that it was not too soon to die; for there was a churchyard to which on these occasions she generally went, and under the shadow of a thin line of sycamores, there was a grave stone

on which she used to rest, and it was placed over one, whose age had been but a few months more than her own, and whose name was Lucy too. And to this place when asked to walk, she would often bend her steps, and sit there, and think sad thoughts, on that grave-stone beneath the old sycamores.

There is something in the churchyard's melancholy which the wretched almost love. There at last, is peace and rest, a seclusion from all their pressing fears and sorrows, an equality of humanity which their lot in this world is denied. There is no scoff for poverty there, and no honour for the great, but a cold carved stone. An open grave is a picture, which tells of the rich man's loss, and the poor man's gain —for here prosperity and adversity have a common name.

Lucy had been thinking of Walter before he arrived. It was no marvel that, for she often thought of him now; and day after day had hoped that he might come again. But he came

not; toil, poverty and fears came daily, the dull morning, and the cheerless night, and pain and weariness began to come, and the dread of illness which gives poverty its sharpest fangs, and the thought of what her mother's condition then would be—and the pride which labour nourishes, so dear to the strcken hearts of those who have struggled to maintain it, and the loss of all; that too might be lost to her, while her mother ate the bread of charity, and she lay on an hospital bed.

Of all her sad visions, this was the worst; and it haunted her night and day—her spirits sank more than ever, although she laboured harder than before; and the indistinct hopes she formerly had at times, of something better in long perspective, were now converted into one only, that God would spare her the only degradation which innocence can know. She would work, she would labour night and day without repining, she would crush every feeling that was struggling in her bosom, she would cease

to think of former happiness, or to compare her condition with that of those of her sex and age, who were more fortunate than herself; all this she would do, but night and morning she offered up her meek prayer to heaven, to be spared from *that*. And without a murmur she continued her cheerless industry, with such thoughts as these for her companions—but nature would have its own. The forehead was often throbbing, the eyelids drooped and trembled, the slight back ached continually, and a slow unnoticed fever was secretly wasting the energies of life.

As has been said, Walter found her alone. The blush, the timid eye, and cold trembling hand welcomed him, and once more he sat by her side.

"I am come to bid you good bye, Lucy," he said, "I leave London this very day."

Lucy did not speak, but her cheek was blanched, as she raised her mild eyes to his.

"Do you leave England?" she asked, after a pause.

"Not at present, but I fear it may be sometime ere I can return to London, and I assure you that it is with a regret more painful than you can know, that I leave it without having been able in any way to assist your mother in, in ——"

"Let not that distress you," said Lucy, "I know her hopes can never be realized. I was unhappy, indeed I was, that she should have mentioned them to you; for I well knew that any efforts to accomplish them, would only expose you to repulses. She does not see things," added Lucy, mournfully, "as I do now—"

"Nay it is not that," said Walter, with some embarrassment, "but, but Lucy could I—you must know me well enough for that—*could* I have done any thing to alleviate your condition, I——

"I know it," said Lucy earnestly, "and you have applied for us, and met cold repulses, but

let not that trouble you on our account. I knew it was hopeless from the first. Yet she is so good, and so kind to me," continued Lucy, with an emotion which she could not hide, "there never was such a mother, and how little, how very little, do I do for her!"

"Nay Lucy I see enough to know, that you reproach yourself unjustly there."

"No no, I am indolent at times. I allow my own feelings to get the better, and often forget what hers must be. My poor mother! who has she now in the world but me."

There was a pause, and never had Walter felt the curse of poverty with such poignancy as then.

"And do you leave London, to-day?" resumed Lucy.

"I do," said Walter.

"And you say it may be long ere you return?"

"It may indeed," answered Walter, with a

degree of dejection which he felt increasing on him. "Lucy, we may never meet again, for it is not improbable, I may go abroad, and end my days there. I have no ties now," added he mournfully, "that bind me to England—but the reverse. You will remember me to your mother. Tell her that it was my total inability to serve her, which prevented me from doing so. More I shall not say, it would only make you unhappy to know the cause fully, and you have sorrows enough of your own. But of this be assured," continued Walter, with emotion, "if ever fortune smile upon me, the widow and child of my kind old friend, shall hear of me again. God bless you Lucy! may you both be as happy as I could wish."

He parted from her—yes, he was gone! She was in the room alone. She took up her work mechanically with the instinct of industry, but her hands trembled, her arms fell by her side! she looked around her on the scanty place—

there it was, sad and real, with the dull street with its busy cries beyond. The iron entered into her soul—and she lifted up her voice, and wept!

CHAPTER IX.

How Mr. Unicorn conducted himself on the stage coach, and what befel Priam Guthrie at Blackheath.

On returning to his lodgings, Walter dispatched Priam to Blackheath, then, much to the surprise of his landlady, called for his bill, paid it and packed his trunks; putting an abrupt stop to her interjections, by telling her that he had to leave London immediately, and requesting her to send out for a cab. . He then wrote such a letter to Priam as he had intended, but on looking at his purse he found that he had only about three pounds remaining, not a great

deal more indeed than would pay his expences to Pepplesford, a small town some fifty miles from London, where Sparebone House, the academy in question, was situated. He therefore took out his watch, inclosed it in a small parcel, with the letter, in which he requested Priam to accept it, as the only thing which his circumstances left him able to offer, in reward for his services.

This done, he drove to the inn from which he and his fellow professors were to start. Here he found them, with Doctor Antioch, and Ganymede Unicorn. Although it was in truth a sad occasion, yet efforts were made to make it a merry meeting; and in these Walter did his best to join. Mr. Unicorn in particular was zealous in this way, for much as he regretted the departure of so many members of the Lord Burleigh parlour, he seemed resolved, for the time at least, to drown his cares. He proposed toasts innumerable, and would have told more anecdotes than the time permitted, he even

sang a song, and abused the waiter because he interrupted him in the middle of it, to say that the coach was ready.

Another freak entered into the barber's head. It was a fine day, and he would accompany his friends for a stage or two. They all with one voice protested against this, Doctor Antioch in particular, reminding him of what Mr. Burton's fate had been, on a late and somewhat similar occasion. But the barber was inexorable, and as the coachman would not wait, further expostulation was useless. He accordingly mounted to the roof, taking his seat behind the driver, Walter and Mr. Buckhurst having put him between them to prevent accidents, Mr. Unicorn being in a state of temporary elevation, apart from his position on the coach.

Off they drove, Titus Antioch, M. D. standing desolate on the pavement, watching them with sorrowful eyes, until they turned the corner. Off they drove, rolling boldly through the city streets, the more open Strand—until

after a short delay in Oxford-street, the impatient horses began to show their mettle as they gallopped merrily along the Uxbridge road. Here a carriage dashed past them, nearly at the same speed, but not too quickly, to prevent Lady Felton, giving an astonished glance and a hasty bow to Walter, who had hardly time to return the salute.

Here were travelling carriages of the great returning to town, covered with trunks and bespattered with mud, respectable valetudinarians taking quiet rides on quiet horses with quiet looking grooms riding behind them—omnibusses now off the stones, proceeding at a travelling pace with their conductors singing independently, and looking about them at the country; small gigs flying along the road, and heavy carriages as grave as Kensington palace, jogging on easily. But such objects by and bye became more rare, a waggon or a heavy night coach covered with haggard passengers on the roof, and feverish insides fanning themselves desperately, were now

the most conspicuous objects they met, the country. escaping from an infinitude of new terraces, began to open around them freshly, and the coachman flinging down the reins on the smoking horses, showed that they had completed the first stage.

It was a new looking, cold walled inn, with freshly painted signboards, and active attendance. The landlord, a fine looking man about thirty-five, with thick curly saxon brown hair, a white apron neatly tucked on one side—and cleanly shaved, made a most favourable impression on Mr. Unicorn, and he determined to alight, and drink something in the cool parlour, the windows of which were invitingly open. Walter would have remonstrated against this, but Mr. Buckhurst seemed to approve of the suggestion, the coachman was invited, less from good fellowship than a desire to gain time, and a stout farmer with a broad brimmed hat, a square skirted black coat, drab breeches, and

top boots, who occupied the spare part of the box seat, also accompanied them.

They all took off their hats on entering the room, for it was a warm spring day, and the farmer happening to be very bald, attracted Mr. Unicorn's attention at once. Spirits and cold water were ordered and hastily consumed, Walter, although he disliked drinking in the forenoon, yet from a desperate wish to keep up his spirits, drinking a glass of brandy in a tumbler of soda water. The barber drank rather more incautiously, and, warmed with genuine spirits, took the liberty of remarking to the farmer, who was wiping his forehead with a yellow pocket handkerchief, that it was a thousand pities he continued bald, when so many remedies could be had. The farmer, who was a very independent sort of person, as he always paid his rent, replied by some remark in relation to humbug in general, and Mr. Unicorn's connection with it in particular; which, as the coach was on the very point of starting, the

latter had no opportunity of noticing at the time; but no sooner were they all seated again, and the horse cloths whipped from the team, than as they started forward at a gallop, which further roused the barber's spirits, he began to turn over the words in his mind. It was evident they had excited his anger, for during the progress of the stage, he shook his fists once or twice in a violent way at the broad back of the farmer, muttering the offensive term over and over again. By these means, aided too by the effect of the spirits he had drank, and the rapid motion of the coach, he worked himself up to a state of fury, and whipping out his scissars, before either of his companions knew what he was about, in a twinkling, he cut off the skirts of the farmer's coat! It luckily happened that at the moment, the coach was running uneasily over some broken stones, and the farmer thus remained unconscious of the injury he had sustained; while both Walter and Mr. Buckhurst were so taken by surprise, that for a moment

or two they remained gazing on the back parts of the shorn agriculturist, as if doubting their eyes. It is probable however that they both would have had recourse to different measures with their companion, had not his rolling from side to side sufficiently proclaimed a condition which called for better offices; and until the end of the stage they remained holding the barber between them, and watching uneasily every movement of the farmer's hands. Even the Frenchman, who sat with a stout lady and the guard behind the coach, raised his eyebrows, shrugged his shoulders, and appeared ill at ease.

Every thing however went on well enough, till the end of the stage. Then they all descended, Mr. Unicorn with precarious difficulty: but no sooner had the farmer touched the ground, than putting his hand to get his pocket handkerchief, and feeling nothing but his breeches, he turned twice round, clapping both hands behind him, to solve the mystery.

This he might not have done so soon, if he had not happened to cast his eyes again to the coach, and seen his coat skirts lying under feet. In a moment he guessed who had committed such a wanton and almost unprovoked outrage on his person. Half suffocating himself with oaths, he flew in a frantic manner at the barber, and would have probably killed him on the spot, had not Walter and Mr. Buckhurst forcibly kept him off; a task which was rendered more difficult, by their having at the same time to restrain the barber, who had taken out his scissars, and was snapping them furiously at the farmer's face, calling out, "I'm a humbug, am I?" The Frenchman also exerted himself to keep the peace, aided by the guard, who was short winded, and averse to riot; and at length Mr. Unicorn was prevailed upon to enter the inn, and consent to go no farther with the coach. But here again his evil genius got the better of him—approaching the barmaid, in as cavalier a manner as his condition would allow,

he ventured to put his arm round her waist, having an idea that his late achievement would gain him favour in the eyes of the fair. The girl who was accustomed to such innocent liberties, did not seem to mind it much, but Ganymede having whispered something in her ear about the extract of cucumbers, she suddenly dealt him a blow in the face, that made him see stars. The barber returned the courtesy, and a desperate scuffle ensued. Here the landlord himself interfered, and with some difficulty separated the combatants, and the waiter, with the assistance of one of the ostlers, carried Mr. Unicorn to bed.

The guard blew his horn fiercely, the farmer mounted the box again with his coat skirts in his hand, and Mr. Buckhurst now joined by Monsieur Pompastour, took their seats behind him, and the coach drove on.

Leaving them to continue their journey, let us return to Mr. Priam Guthrie, who by this time was approaching Blackheath.

The coroner's inquest had soon been over, the mere mention of the number of the deceased's daughters, having made the jury unanimous in their verdict of temporary insanity.

Mr. Burton had been accommodated with a room for the day, in an adjoining lodging house, in which he wrote out his report; and after waiting for some time with some restlessness for Priam, he went out, and took a walk about the place.

He had not proceeded many paces, when he came to a cart-wright's shop. The master of the establishment, just as he passed, running out holding a red hot piece of iron in a pair of tongs, for the purpose of thrusting it into some water near the door, stumbled over a large worn out grindstone, lying prostrate among the weeds.

Uttering a furious oath, as he held the hissing iron in the water, he shouted out in a desperate tone, "why is not this worthless old grindstone taken out of this?"

A sudden thought at these words arrested Mr. Burton's steps. He went up to the cartwright and offered to buy the stone. A bargain was speedily struck, and for a few coppers Mr. Burton became the envied purchaser of the relict. He had it wrapped up in hay, obtained a strong rope, which he inserted through the centre hole, and two men carried his purchase into his room. A minute or two afterwards, Mr. Guthrie arrived.

"You have had a long walk," remarked Pontius, taking the letter and laying it on the table without opening it, as Priam seated himself.

"A mile and a-half o' uneven road, since I left the railway," said the Scotsman.

"You ought to be accustomed to uneven road," said Pontius, "since the surface of your own dear country, is like the sea in a storm."

"Many an ane speaks against Scotland, wha hae never set a foot on it, and may be are incapable o' judging if they did," said Priam.

"Oh I have set both feet on it," said Pontius, "which, by the way, I trust I may never do again."

"May be ye found the penal laws a wee bit ower sevare," said the Scotsman, cynically.

Mr. Burton took up the letter and read it. It was simply a few lines from Walter, bidding him good-bye, and requesting him, if he thought it likely to be of any service, to add his advice to that which Priam would find waiting for him on his return—to look out for some better employment, than that which he had so strongly taken a fancy for.

"I am afraid Mr. Guthrie," said Pontius, as he put the open letter on the table, "that you will find it very heavy."

"Find what heavy?" demanded the Scotsman.

"That grindstone," said Pontius, calmly.

"And what in heeven's name, does my master want wi' a grindstone?" demanded Priam, with some concern.

"I can't tell you that," said the other, "but so it is. And this very day too. It is an antique of some value."

"Grindstone!" repeated Priam.

"Ay, there it is."

"And o' value, do you say?"

"Oh yes, it is as old as some of your genealogies. I suppose it is valuable on that account, for I can see no other merit that it possesses."

"But a grindstone!" continued Priam, looking doubtfully at it.

"Yes—I suppose some of your Scotch kings, or great men, may have ground scissars on it for a livelihood. But there it is, and you must take it with you."

Priam, like all Scotsmen, disliked any banter on his country, and although not yet quite recovered from his surprise, he went up to the stone, and felt its weight, holding his breath at the same time.

"I shall have to carry it a good mile and a

lf," said he grimly; "before I get to the rail-ay. Is there naebody about, that will avour me wi' a lift. You, I can see," con-nued the Scotsman sarcastically, "have de-nched your senses out of you, as well as the ith of your arms."

Pontius put his head out of window, and called o one of the cart-wright's men, who with his wn assistance placed the stone on Priam's houlders, and the latter, uttering reproaches m his master, for not having warned him to provide a wheelbarrow, left the house with the burden on his back.

Mr. Burton certainly did feel a twinge of conscience, as he saw the Scotsman toiling up the hill, with the stupendous weight upon his shoulders, and even asked himself, whether a mere national prejudice, justified any man in burdening another with such a load. All this however availed nothing to Priam, who mut-tering curses on himself and all the world, arrived at length, after three quarters of an hour of desperate toil, at the railway station.

Here he met with new difficulties, the attendants declaring that such an out-of-the-way weight, would break down any of the carriages; but Priam who was now infuriated, forced his way, and the train set off with him and his grindstone; which however the other passengers compelled him to keep on his knees.

On arriving at London Bridge, no omnibus would take him in, even the cabmen, whom he hailed, shook their heads when they saw what he carried; and Priam was compelled to bear it through the city, and along Whitechapel and the Mile-end road; having however been several times obliged to put it down, getting it raised again by benevolent policemen.

At length he landed fairly at home, and laid down the stone heavily in Walter's room.

But now the curtain must drop. No words can pourtray the surprise and consternation which he felt at his master's letter, and the landlady's news, nor can any discreet language adequately express the furious indig-

nation which, exasperated as it was by aching shoulders, and his other sufferings, he uttered against the base trick which the Englishman had played him. Even the landlady's accustomed powers of condolence failed her here, he threw the cup of tea she offered him at her head, ruining a new cap, and injuring her ruff for ever; thrust her violently out of the room, flung himself on Walter's deserted sofa, covered his head with the pillows, and uttered injurious terms against his mother, for having brought him into the world.

CHAPTER X.

How Walter Osborne arrived at Pebblesford, with some particulars of Sparebone House.

THINGS went on much more smoothly with the travellers when the barber was gone. The farmer, who knew that his wife would come down to the road to meet him, was the only person who appeared out of sorts, and sat devising how he might descend the coach, so as to conceal his disaster, until he should have an opportunity of explaining how it happened; but it became at length apparent to him that

this was impossible, and nothing but his embarrassment could exceed his fury against the barber, on whom he inwardly resolved to have vengeance, if there was any justice remaining in England. His worst fears, in regard to his wife, were realized—there she was, waiting for him, and he had no sooner turned to get down, than she uttered a scream of dismay, so quickly followed by a host of questions, that ere the sole of his top boots touched the ground, he had more to answer than would occupy a quarter of an hour. He did not for the moment attempt to do so, but hastily paying the guard, suffered the coach to drive away, then, with his coat skirts in his hand, began to ascend the rising ground leading to his house, where he was seen from the receding coach, endeavouring, as he walked along, to explain matters to his wife, who was nodding her head desperately, and holding up her hands.

"I wonder what that ere lady would take now, for all she has got to say?" said the coach-

man, turning half round, and addressing Mr. Buckhurst.

"I don't know," said Horatio, "but I dare say her husband would sell his share of it cheap."

"There's room for any gentleman here," said the coachman, glancing at the vacant seat on his left.

"Let me hold the ribbons a while then," said the ex-rector. "I have driven a coach before now."

The coachman looked at Horatio for a moment, then as if satisfied with the investigation, gave him up his seat, the reins, and the whip. The classical assistant took the place with alacrity, gathered up the reins, squared out his arms, sitting as erect as a flag-staff, but easy withal; and uttering a few peculiar sounds to the horses, feeling their mouths gently with their bridles, and just letting them understand that he had the whip in his hands, established

an understanding between himself and them, which continued till the end of the stage.

That was the dining place, and a substantial dinner, with some freshly drawn ale—succeeding the coachman's enconiums on his driving—had put Mr. Buckhurst in excellent spirits; even the Frenchman became gay, and Walter felt himself somewhat less indisposed to melancholy than before.

On they drove again. The sinking sun shone warmly, the guard stimulated by rum and water played a joyous air on his bugle, the horses gallopped, the harness gingled, and Mr. Buckhurst made the whip float over them as lightly as the line of a fishing rod. How they plunged forward down the gentle hills! and how cheerfully under Horatio's whistle they breasted up the rising grounds! how the coachman winked at every pretty girl on the green foot path, and how the guard raised his hat afterwards with dashing courtesy to them! On they drove; through rich fields that the lark was settling

on, and woods in which the thrush was giving forth its evening song, passing hedge inns, at which now and then covered baskets, and similar packages, and even an agitated woman in a holiday dress, would be placed on the coach, while Horatio held the pawing horses, with the foam flying from their bits like surf.

Evening crept on, the sun was getting low and large, and a slight breeze blew coolly—the fields had a deeper green, and the openings in the thick plantations were becoming dark—the horses struggled on, but did not pull so cheerfully as before.

By and bye the grey church spire of Pebblesford was seen rising above some dark foliaged trees, and another sweep of the road, showed the small town itself; vegetating in oblivion under the shelter of a broad based hill. Cottages, and straggling houses of the better class branched out from the town here and there in broken lines—one or two gentleman's seats studded the surrounded country, the long yellow

rays of the setting sun were quivering on a dark quiet river, of which the travellers caught shining glimpses at times—but otherwise the scenery, as far as shadowy light revealed, was of a quiet, English turn-pike-road character. There was a heavy yeoman-like look about it, in spite of its fair share of natural beauties—it was a place which one would feel disposed rather to pass through, than to remain in long.

Such was Walter's impression of it; but they were now rapidly approaching the town. Mr. Buckhurst had told the coachman their place of destination, and he had promised to point out the house to them, at which the coach might stop on its way to the inn at which it changed horses; for Pebblesford was a town which the coach passed through, without an abiding place. Mr. Buckhurst put the horses to their mettle again, and they entered the town in gallant style. The guard's horn rang in the market place, the wheels rattled over the stones, and passing into another street, the coach drew

suddenly up before a large brick building, with "Sparebone House, Mr. Death's classical, mathematical, commercial, and agricultural academy," in a medley of Saxon and Roman characters, on a large brass plate on the door.

That gentleman himself was now standing on the door steps, waiting for the arrival of the coach, which was to bring him his assistants, and engaged in conversation with a grave looking man, who was arranging with him about sending his son to his academy. Great was the schoolmaster's surprise and dismay, at seeing his classical assistant driving a coach, and handling the whip as if he had been born with one in his hand.

Honest Horatio was quite unconscious of any deadly sin in what he had been about, and neither observed the dry abrupt leave which the careful parent took of the schoolmaster, after having given a very dissatisfied look at the Latin master, nor the schoolmaster's icy look to him-

self, but continued busy in getting down the luggage, and preventing delay to the coach.

Mr. Death stalked before his three assistants, and showed them the apartments in which their luggage was to be placed, and which they were respectively to consider their own. These small rooms opened each on a large chamber, with rows of low curtainless postless beds on each side, which gave the place something of the look of an hospital, and contained itself, a French bed, one chair; a looking-glass, which, by swelling one part of the face, and elongating the other, did its best to put the unhappy tenant of the dormitory out of conceit with his own appearance—a morsel of faded stair carpet on the floor, and a wash-hand stand so placed in a corner, that the person using it could not stand upright, on account of a low slanting nitch in that part of the ceiling, nor move an inch on either side, on account of the whitening on the walls.

Having been formally installed in their rooms,

and put themselves in presentable order, according to their respective abilities, Mr. Death received them again, in what he called his study; a room evidently contrived after the engravings of such places in children's books. He sat in a large highbacked chair, with a square footstool under one of his feet; on one side of him, was a globe; and on the other, a pile of large folios. The walls were pretty well adorned with the backs of books, but the literary solitude of these arrangements was somewhat marred by two cupboards, both of which were now partly open, the one containing Mrs. Death's preserves, and the other her bed and table linen.

Mr. Onesipherus Death was a man of gigantic stature, and a remarkably powerful voice. His forehead was very low, and his short thick black hair stood on end around it, his eyebrows beetling over large sockets, containing a pair of small bottle-green eyes—and his other features hard and square. He wore black, and

his aspect was evidently intended to have a clerical look.

"My dear friends," said Onesipherus, "I need not tell you how happy I am to see you, having for the last three days had no assistance in the arduous duties of my profession, but the curate, when the boys were in school, and the constable, when they were out of doors. I am afraid therefore, that you will find your several departments in rather a backward state, to wit, the classical, mathematical, and French languages; the others, that is to say, the commercial, agricultural, and English language and punctuation, as they form my own department, I flatter myself are——"

Here a tap at the door interrupted the professor, and when he went to answer it, a voice was heard saying, "Please sir can I get out the pillow-slips, for the new gentlemen's beds?"

"Is tea nearly ready, Elizabeth?" inquired her master.

"Please sir, Miss is in her room, changing of

her frock, and she *would* keep her hair in papers till the new gentlemen——"

"Well, well, well," replied the schoolmaster, "You may come here, when we leave the room—and entering the study again, he requested his new guests to accompany him to the drawing room, which they did."

This was a cold looking room, seeming as if it was not often used. It was indeed only employed as a receiving room for the parents of the boys of the academy, strangers of the higher grades, and dinner parties. This unusual purpose for such a room was kept in countenance by a side board of tolerable plate, for it was the custom of the boys of the academy to present their master every year with a fish slice, a silver tea pot, a couple of salt cellars, and other such extortions of their regard. To these donations the unfortunate ushers were not only supposed to contribute, but also to direct the boys as to the character of the metallic offering most likely to be acceptable, which from hints

from Mr. Death, they were always enabled to do; and so the poor urchins, with the folly of riper years, stinted themselves for months, to save up half-crowns from their little pocket money, to make an offering and a jubilee. The practice even became a vain glorious boast to the unhappy sufferers, and the boys of the other schools in the town—it was a colony of schools chiefly supported by little immigrants from the metropolis—adopted the same practice, so generally so indeed, that it induced an enterprising silversmith to settle in the town—who to secure the trade (being a Jew, and a man of the world) allowed the masters of the academies a small per centage on the price of the offerings made to them.

In this drawing room Onesipherus told his new assistants many things, among others, that he was a poet, and an admirer of elocution, which he taught his pupils himself. He even produced a thick manuscript work, written on pages originally ruled for pounds, shillings, and

pence—an epic poem entitled "Jane Shore." He informed them also, that he had some prose works by him, ready for the press—whenever the present foolish fancy for ephemeral writings should subside—not on any of the trivial subjects which now engaged public attention, but regular solid reading, such as essays on the 'Improvement of Time,' the 'Advantages of Industry,' and the 'Certainty of Death:' of which he had great hopes at some future day. The ushers however were relieved from their apprehensions, that he was about to read some of these works to them, by the servant's announcing that tea was ready.

On descending to the parlour, they found Mrs. Death and Miss Violet waiting for them. The former of these was an active looking lady, to whom all faces new and old were alike—she received the three strangers with very apparent unconcern, and without much ceremony began pouring out the tea. The latter was a stout young lady, rather pretty, and looking quite

fresh and nice. *She* received the strangers differently; in an attempt to do so with extreme dignity, she fell in the error of rudeness, and as she curtesied retiringly in the process of introduction, she unconsciously looked at the three gentlemen as if she was anxious to express to them not only contempt, but even animosity.

Soon after tea, the constable returned with the boys from playing cricket on the common, Mr. Death conducted his three new masters to the school room—a building at the back of the house—where he formally introduced them to their pupils. This done, he told them that he would relieve from duty that night, as they might be fatigued by their journey.

Miss Violet, it would appear, had found it impossible to maintain the high stand she had assumed, and at supper broke down at once to lively familiarity, which evidently was much more natural to her; the former bearing indeed being merely a part of her system; although

had the change been rather more gradual it might have been better. She broke the merry-thought of a chicken with Walter, and displayed some symptoms of being prepossessed in his favour, but then, as she always fell in love with whoever happened to be youngest and best looking of her father's assistants, any preference on her part must be considered as the result rather of situation than merit. Monsieur Pompadour who was a citizen of the world, and Mr. Buckhurst who seldom thought beyond the occasion of the hour, were very much at their ease, and drank Mr. Death's hot spirits and water with much composure, but the sad change which Walter felt the more vividly, now that he was no longer his own master, kept him dejected and unhappy.

Next morning their duties began in earnest. At seven o'clock they were all in the school room, a long naked walled place, smelling of spilt ink and slates. Mr. Buckhurst, who was still able to translate Cæsar, and Walter, who

had not quite forgotten the first book of Euclid and algebraical subtraction, got on very well, and the Monsieur Pompadour, who understood his own language, had of course very little difficulty in his department. The boys, unaccustomed to see a person of Walter's appearance in the character of their teacher, regarded him with great wonder and reverence, and he himself, in the novelty of his situation forgot for the time many bitter associations, and even took interest in endeavouring to instruct the poor little fellows, whose evil stars as well as his own had brought them together; and the other assistants "being accustomed to tuition" managed their duties with practised decorum.

About eight o'clock, Mr. Death entered the school, arrayed in long tartan dressing gown, and a red Greek cap with a gold tassel—and now was the hour for elocution. Waving his hand, which instantly produced silence in the school, he advanced with a dignified step to the centre of the room, holding a book in one

hand, and making a few graceful movements with the other by way of overture. "This morning," said Onesipherus, "as it is getting near breakfast time, we shall merely do the speech about the apothecary in the admired Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, in which you will all join. Being a soliloquy," he added, addressing his assistants, "it is most effective when they do it altogether, Now then!" he continued, waving his hand again.

At these words about a hundred boys started from their seats, and began running about distractedly, as if in quest of something; at another wave, they struck their hands to their foreheads as if in great embarrassment, and at last, at another, they all shouted out.

"I *do* remember an apothecary,
And here about he dwells—"

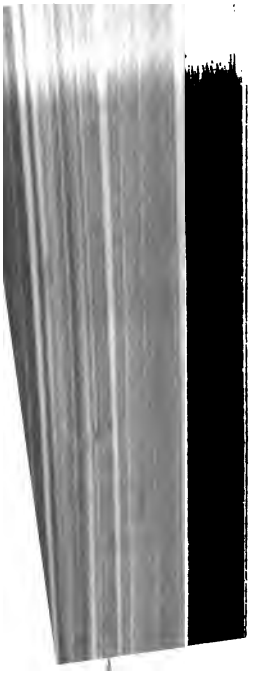
And so on, with the rest of the soliloquy, not only putting triumphant emphasis on the word "do," but raising their right knees, and striking the floor with such force as they pronounced it, that the dust rose in clouds,

half stifling Walter and Mr. Buckhurst, and making the Frenchman rush to the door.

After this exercise was over, the school was set at liberty, the day boys going home, and the boarders going in to breakfast.

Mr. Death took in the Times for two hours every morning, and it was his custom as he read it during breakfast, to hand over courteously to some of his ushers, that half of the paper which is usually devoted to advertisements. He did so now, and Walter was the person on whom the boon was conferred. Glancing over the closely printed columns, for some time without feeling much interested by them, the blood suddenly rushed to his forehead, with confusion and anger, at the following advertisement, which being of a pressing nature had been allotted—as is usual in that magnificent paper—a very prominent place.

"LEFT HIS FRIENDS.—On Thursday last, a young man twenty-five years of age, height, five feet nine or ten; fair complexion, high fore-



trousers and
boots. His
shall give su
discovery, to
street, Mile-en
baker, No 1, a
will receive a re

CHAPTER XI.

How Katherine Brandon is informed by the Grave-digger of some matters of an interesting kind.

It is time to return to Skerryton, and its vicinity. The thriving sea-port town itself had undergone little or no change. The inhabitants still walked about the quiet streets, the tide ebbed and flowed in the harbour, and the sea went on as it had used to do, under the cliffs—Sir William Wallace got his new summer coat of red paint, to which the artist this spring added a pair of yellow epaulets; the municipal factions, kept their mutual acrimony

in an excellent state of preservation, and the various circles of society preserved their wonted exclusiveness, the first class with jealous watchfulness in regard to the debateble circle—which for the last few years, had become alarmingly usurping on account of the Reform Bill—and the debateable circle, actively guarding against this spirit in those beneath them, yet taking full advantage of it in their own case, with the small magnates whose exclusiveness was still the subject of their secret bitterness. The worthy minister had his leisure disturbed by the great question of Non-Intrusion, and only avoided being entangled in an expensive action in the courts of justice; and a warfare with the state on one hand or the chnrch on the other—by studiously becoming so ill as to be confined to his room, whenever there happened to be a meeting of Presbytery.

Baillie Boortree continued to rule the public affairs of the borough, and be ruled himself by his wife, so notoriously so that the bellman and

town crier dusted her carpets for nothing, and vagrant showmen called on *her* to request permission to exhibit in the town, although when they got in they put on their handbills "by permission of the Baillie." He, decent man, cared little for authority, so long as it was in the family. He had long been accustomed to consider domestic emancipation as a hopeless thing, and it ceased to form any obstacle to his exertions, although he well knew that the scold of his bosom must alone enjoy their fruits. The superior of the parish—a feudal dignitary, resembling the lord of the manor in England—returned from abroad, after an absence of several years, and occupied his ancestral, or rather his paternal hall, as his father had purchased the estate. He had married an English lady of rank, a sister of Lady Felton's, and was naturally a great man in these parts. He was a gentleman who had a genius for giving dinners, and the deeply rooted prejudices of his education, made him actively conversant with

the intricacies of small society; his wife was an elegant woman, something of a flirt, with one child, a pale faced boy, who rode on a long tailed pony. Their arrival was generally considered a happy thing for Skerryton, but mischief came of it.

Every gentleman of the first circle of Skerryton who could undertake a journey of five miles and back, and indeed those who could not do so, had been invited to dine at Granite-Hall, but one—one only, and he too had in former days been a standing, and at times a falling guest there. For why? he had in the absence of the great man opposed his nominee, in behalf of a third cousin of his own, in the contested election for the office of treasurer on a small turnpike road trust; the salary of which was twenty pounds a year. The erring man had not indeed done so, while he knew that Agrippa Ponderous Esquire, such was the august dignitary's name, had taken any interest in the matter, and even when it reached his ears, like a clap of

thunder that he had, he could not for shame's sake fall into the dinner eating ranks, after having not only promised his own vote, but even asked others for theirs, in behalf of the unhappy candidate who had dared to turn his open eyes to the sun.

The election took place, and Agrippa's nominee, as every body expected, was duly elected to the important office; and the matter slumbered every where except in Agrippa's bosom.

The aristocracy — carefully excluding the wretched debateable circle—were now, as has been told, duly invited to consume beef and port-wine at Granite Hall, all but this degraded man, and the consequence was, what might naturally have been expected, that he was found one afternoon in his bedroom hanging dead! suspended by the neck from a strong brass peg, by a rope which he had purchased for the occasion.

This affair had indeed very much agitated the public mind of Skerryton, but the moral they drew from it was a wholesome one—never

to oppose Agrippa Ponderous in any thing whatever. Baillie Boortree indeed, said as much at the funeral, using however the general term "Magistrate," instead of any particular name, Agrippa being a justice of the peace.

This was the only event at Skerryton worthy of being chronicled since the reader has been there.

And now spring had come with its sweet freshness on the earth, and the thick woods were in foliage, although the curled leaves did not yet hide with their greenness, the brown forest stems; but the lark sung loudly in the morning, and the evening was a gentle time. And the sky was more blue, and less cold in its blueness; and the white clouds were higher, and the grey mountains seemed lower than before. And the plough had made black square patches within the lines of verdure, and the grassy spots were of a sunny green; and the cuckoo mocked the dull pebbly sound of the surge on the hidden beach, and wild flowers bloomed where the sea spray had been. And

the gardens of the fishermen and the inland cottager were neatly trimmed, and the yoked harrows were seen here and there; and the white clover began to sweeten the air, and the daisies to whiten the pasture braes. The primrose bloomed unnoticed on the waste, and the blue-bell opened on the sandy ground. And every thing had a cheerful look, and there was a happy aspect on all the country round, all but the churchyard, and it was lonely still.

The winter moss was dim indeed on the old grey belfry, and the sun at times shone brightly on white marble squares, but the weeds and the long grass, were more melancholy in their verdure than they had been in their winter guise. The tall gate had its cracked white paint untouched, and its creaking hinges were rusty as before. There was no cropped lawn, no gravelled drive, no spring leaves to grace the approach to the dead; there, rich and poor, they lay forgotten in their weeds when gayer garments were worn by those who

had mourned for them. The coach many of them had travelled in rolled daily past them, ships once their own entered the harbour, and lands which were theirs, suffered by the storms and were benefited by gentle days; while they lay forgotten there. Their very memory was being lost, for those who remembered them on the evening, forgot them when the morning with its busy duties came. Winter snow, and summer shower, spring winds and the autumn blast, the sower's whistle, and the reaper's song came and passed away; but there all seasons were alike, and time had ceased to change. And the stranger's cottage was now a pretty spot. The birds had built their nests on the banks of the little brook that ran by the garden wall; the hawthorn was beginning to whiten the hedges of the lane, and the wide views around the house were verdant and beautiful.

Sir Edmund had gone to London, soon after receiving the news of his wife's death, and Katherine and Mrs. Arden, with a few ser-

vants were now the only inmates of the cottage. Simeon Delvin still managed to have occasional employment on the grounds; the duration of which he extended considerably beyond their natural limits, as such artists are wont to do. He was by no means an acceptable person to the servants, English and Scotch; the former having a prejudice against the man, and the latter against his calling. But Simeon worked on, indifferent to all that, frequently even bringing down unnecessary denunciations against himself, by his strictures on waste and idleness.

The day on which Walter went to enter on his new office, Simeon was working in these grounds. His coat was off, and as he now and then stuck his spade in the ground, leaving it stationary there, and leaning his elbow on the smooth handle, he would look around him with much gravity, then take out a letter, and read over again from beginning to end. At one of these times he was so intent on this, that

he did not hear a light step approaching, and Katherine stood before him when he raised his eyes.

"I give ye good day Miss," said Simeon folding up the letter, spitting in his open palms, and seizing his spade again, "this is gracious weather for the time o' the year."

"It is indeed a fine spring day," said Katherine, "Have got me the seeds I told you of?"

"That I hae, that I hae," said Simeon, handing her a packet of garden seeds, "Ahem!" resumed Simeon after a pause, during which, Katherine with a woman's curiosity, was looking into the ends of the various little parcels in her hand.

"O you saw me reading a letter."

"You mean that which you were reading now."

"Even so,—and it contains something I was surprised to hear. It was frae a ne'er-do-weel nephew o' mine."

Katherine's interest was not much excited at this, yet she asked what it was which had occasioned his surprise.

"In the first place," said Simeon, (putting down his spade), "I am surprised that Priam, who is a young and strong man, does na pay the postage, and in the second, I am surprised at mysel, for having ta'en the letter in."

"And is that all then?" said Katherine, opening the last parcel.

"Its half a day's wages lost, but it's ill making a moan for what is past amendment. Yet it's a heavy loss to me—and naething doing in the yard."

"What yard?"

"The Kirk—that is to say, my other duties—ahem! But this post-office affliction, may probably atone for some sma' sin, and we are a' imperfect judges o' what is best for us. Yet for a' that," continued Simeon, resuming his spade, "I shall take good care to avoid ony mair dispensations o' the like again. Dear, dear!" he observed to himself aloud, "but its strange that this now should be the very young man, that was down here twa months ago."

"That's the nephew you spoke of," said Katherine.

"What Priam!" exclaimed Simeon, "the Diel has ta'en him in keeping, since the black day he behoved to gang awa' amang the Spaengiards, preferrin' blood-shed to bakin' bread. He has been a brand in the burnin', for three lang years and mair. No, no, my leddy, it's no Priam Guthrie that I speak o', but as bonny a lad as ye wad see in a summer day. He was here twa months syne, making earnest inquiries after you and Sir Edmund. Priam is now in his service, and he writes me that his master is ane o' the richest and greatest men in England."

"Who, who mean you?" demanded Katherine quickly. "Put down your spade," she added peevishly, as Simeon now continued to use it, even more strenuously than before.

"Put down my spawd," repeated Simeon, striking it into the ground, however, and leaving it standing there. "That English pestilence,

o' a flurkey says I put it down ower aften. He says I lose five minutes every quarter o' an hour. First says he, the lazy Scotsman puts down his spade, then he raises himsel, and taks a heavy breath—that occupies one minute—then he gangs to his coat, and taks out his snuff mull, that wastes another minute—then he strikes on the lid and looks about him, that disperses another minute, then he opens the box, taks a pinch, and shuts the box again, that runs awa wi' another,—then he puts it into his coat again, folds it up, and lays it carefully down, and there is another wasted, and then——"

"Never mind that," said Katherine impatiently, "tell me who this is, who you say was making inquiries about me."

"But they are his words, my bonny leddy, his very words. Lazy indeed! when his banes are as auld as mine—if he escape hanging till then—he will be sittin' amang poor-house blankets, and thinkin' himsel an injured man, because the

bread o' charity which he eats, is no o' the finest flour. We hae nae poor rates here, and the bed the poor man dies on is his ain. Set them up! the greedy pock-puddings—the stout labourer in England, drinks the strong and eats the fat, and the moment he canna' get employment, he turns himsel on his parish, taxes property and honest industry, and grumbles because o' privations, and the comfort o' his neighbour's store. Now my mind is, my bonny English leddy, and as a parish officer, I hae a kind o' right to speak my mind, let the auld, the sick, the frail widow, and the tender bairn hae their dole, but let the strong man, however hungry, tax no one for his bread, let him cultivate prudence and learn to spare; shut up the haven, and the ship will mak provision for the storm. My poor mother that's dead and gone, knitted stockings for an honest livelihood, for thirty years, and on her death owed no one onything, and left a winding sheet spun by her ain hand, fir deals under her bed to mak her coffin wi',

ihe had bought a *bargain*, and thirty
gs in half crowns in a stocking foot. And
it she toiled and saved, rose early and sat
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, for had I ken't he had been kind to
—wha is my sister's son after a', although
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for him than that, without a bribe—or at
for a less ane than he gave her."

nd his name,— do you know his name?"

He made nae secret o' that," said Simeon
his keen black eyes on the lady, " it was

Mr. Walter Osborne, and Priam writes me that his gold and silver plate, his fine horses, and train o' servants might do for a belted Yirl. But it's like, ye ken mair about him than I do."

Katherine indeed had turned suddenly very pale, and the packet fell from her hands. Simeon quickly caught it up, and forgetting every thing else in his concern for the loss of the seeds which were spilt, and mingled together—got down upon his knees and began to gather them up, attempting to separate the different sorts in the palm of his hand. "Wastry," he muttered to himself. "English wastry,—the bonny seeds scattered like dust!"

"And this gentleman you say was down here about twa months ago" said Katherine, now speaking with difficulty.

"That he was," said Simeon, "and earnest was he to get his letter put into Sir Edmund's hand. I hae heard they had angry meeting in the inn. Ony way he left Skerryton a few days afterwards. There was a sort o' prodigal

that she had bought a *bargain*, and thirty shillings in half crowns in a stocking foot. And for that she toiled and saved, rose early and sat up late, but she had a proud spirit, and though her fare was scanty, and her hardships great, she thanked God wi' her latest breath, that she had never been a burden to ony ane."

"But," demanded Katherine, who took us interest in this burst of national prejudice, "who was this person who you say, was, was"——

"Makin, speerins after you. He cam' down here, and I gae Sir Edmund a letter, I got frae Eppie Dowlas, whom he bribed wi' yellow gold to gie it me. There never was siller waur spent, for had I ken't he had been kind to Priam—wha is my sister's son after a', although sma' credit to her or me, I wad hae done mair for him than that, without a bribe—or at least for a less ane than he gave her."

"And his name,— do you know his name?"

"He made nae secret o' that," said Simeon fixing his keen black eyes on the lady, "it was

CHAPTER XII.

How Sir Edmund Arden came to Granite Hall, and the various aspects of various matters.

THE news which Katherine heard from the grave-digger distressed her acutely. The newspaper report, of which she had heard with unconcern, had then been credited, and by Walter Osborne. No doubt, by others also, but he alone had sought to rescue her. Then her letter, which she now felt convinced must have been required for him, by Sir Edmund,

who, she imagined had considered Walter merely as some emissary from her friends. The thought maddened her! Another reflection disturbed her now—their connection was not of that character, in which either had a right to complain of infidelity in the other—there was no engagement, no mutual promise, or expressed interchange of affection, the bonds between them were such, as the slightest turn in the balance of circumstances, might render strong as steel, or slight as gossamer.

Strange that the very act—that of leaving her parent's roof, which her attachment for Walter had in a great measure influenced her to do, had entailed upon her consequences, even worse than those she had fled to avoid. For it was not the persecution to which the proud-spirited girl had latterly been subjected there, which had induced her to such a fearless demonstration of that free-will, with which a great portion of her sex are in such matters so richly endowed—but the prompt determination, by some decisive

act, to put a stop to a report, which she knew must reach Walter's ears—as it had been mentioned in the journals as being whispered (and which was the fact) in the circles of fashion, but then printed in the same type, and quite as legibly as their facts, such as they are,—that she was about to be the smiling recipient of the envied handkerchief, which the Duke of Kenmore had proferred grace, by throwing at her feet. Had her attachment to Walter been of that formally established character, in which correspondence exists, she could easily have prevented any such impression from affecting his mind, but not having such means of doing so, she somewhat rashly resolved upon an act, which only silenced one report by giving place to another, which until now, had been too odious to disturb her fears.

But even this had been believed,—for a moment believed by Walter Osborne. Yes, if but for one poor moment believed by *him*, it would sting her memory to torture, even in the realiza-

tion of the happy dreams she had often pictured to herself; take from his love its charm, even were the poisoned thought removed. And here Katherine, with the impatient conclusions of such a mind as her's in such a case, yet did her reason wrong in supposing, that a report so odious, and unsustained could have maintained its credence long. In the case of another, she would have easily seen this, nay in her own case she had done so, until she knew it had been believed by Walter Osborne.

It was a bitter thought—that she who could not endure the idea of him supposing her ready to be the wife of another, should now consider her——but the thought was too vile for her mind to express, although not for her heart to feel.

At the age of fifteen Katherine had lost her mother, the very period of life when to a daughter, a good mother is needed most. Surrounded by the attributes of rank and fortune, she saw no prize, no object in the world worth

desiring, but the devoted attachment of one whom she could love for himself alone. How poorly in such feelings as her's were rank and fortune reckoned, how invisible the scale of castes, and the fictitious demarcations which line out the indistinct map, which society calls the world—unknown to herself, she longed to love—the young heart longed for an object to pour its rich treasures on. She was a being who undirected by a mother's anxious counsel might have loved an unworthy object although it may be in the communion with purity, such a one might have stood in hard shadows, and rendered the feeling painful, although still bestowed—but such as yet had been unrequired of her, for Walter Osborne was one whom she had esteemed, as well as admired, and while she loved, also *knew* with the honest confidence of purity, that his heart had been surrendered as fully as her own,—she had never doubted it, she herself had been satisfied with the choice her heart had made, and no more thought of

loving another better, however worthy such another might be to be loved, than the child does of loving the parent of another better than its own. It is a good thing that the gentle confiding heart of early womanhood, does not know the errant vices which radiate from the secret selfishness of the heart of man, although it may be, if it did, it would forgive them all!

And yet Katherine's was a nature, in which if doubt once arose, its effects would be nearly as powerful to destroy, as their absence had been to sustain. It would be no changeling play of feeling, which in the miserable diplomacy of attachment between ordinary lovers, softens the vanity while it hardens the heart; in natures such as Katherine's it is an earnest and a holy trust, which blooms from rooted confidence, or withers where it would have grown.

Katherine without doubting, yet became uneasy from a kindred cause. For might not Walter, now believing her unworthy, love

another—for all women have a quick regard to the greater facilities for forming engagements, which our sex enjoy—this thought humbled her. She would have fain held out her hand halfway over the chasm, which separated her from her lover, and it was more painful than even slight to know, that he could not stretch forth his to grasp it.

These reflections created impatient anguish. It is bad to suffer justly in the eyes of those we love, but to do so innocently is maddening. Reason at length indeed told her, that this hideous impression never could remain long in Walter's mind; but then it did so *now*, and while it continued, she was pitied or despised by the man to whose love she panted to surrender the devotion of her life. She too had her pride; she had longed anxiously for the time when he would take her hand with the flush of exultation on his cheek, with the eye quickened to homage, and the heart throbbing with the joy of offering its incense at the sweet altar

from which the chances of fortune had banished it until then—of witnessing that holy and soul rooted transport into which love vivifies esteem; it was a picture of hope which a breath would sully, and how was it polluted now!

What poison there is in a tongue, even that of a fool, what pauseless torture in a few printed lines, which others read languidly and forget again! Surely the heart has no armour, no triumphs—its rewards are but the worshippers' dole, and its endurance but the searing which has burnt out its gentlest and its brightest feelings. If reason temper it, it is as a hard metal is fused in gold, strengthening it, but taking its purity away; if a knowledge of life pervade it, it becomes spread like gilding over a hundred things until its very name becomes a term for the false varnish of useful wares— or if still in its state of purity it only continues uninjured, when united to its like, and when Heaven's own hand protects it from

stronger and from baser things. Surely the heart, that queen of life, that empress of death-doomed humanity, that sweet and glorious mystery which unites our bondage to the eternal freedom of heaven—that last lingering blessing of paradise which shivers in the lip scoffs of these iron days, surely it has elements which are kindered to the pure beams of that munificent majesty which has created the heavens and the earth — even in paradise, knowledge and life were guarded things, but love was in all, and through all—it was God himself the best element of that divinity which we first enjoyed richly, and which, while a portion of His image remained, could not be wholly taken away.

It has been often said, that the assassins' dagger is not so bad as a slanderous tongue. This is a truth which has become a proverb in all languages, even in those of savage men—we all repeat it readily, but none, except those who have felt its justice, believe it fully. Let

a villain be stabbed on his money chest, and we send the tortured madman to the gibbet with shouts, but he who has ruined the happiness of thousands rolls before us in his glossy coach, and hats are raised as it passes by. The world does *not* believe the proverb, but it is most true for all that; life is not a thing the value of which depends on duration, let a century pass, and then how poor does the advantage seem of the wretch who has lived some twenty years longer than his happy neighbour, when both were dead a hundred years ago!—it is then, when both are beyond the association of instincts which unites life with our own days—it is then and only then, that we can judge correctly of the truth of the proverb which considers poisoned hours no desirable portion of the duration of time. Is the man who has suffered an hour on the rack more to be envied, than he who has slept two hours too long? nobody will think so, yet more than half the world act as if they did.

But to our tale. Sir Edmund Arden, after an absence of some time returned from London, where his attorney had convinced him that his affairs were in a most precarious state to one who wished to live easily. Even the well balanced mind of the baronet became disturbed by this—a successful contest for a seat in parliament had some years ago entangled the machinery from which he derived the means of ministering to his pleasures—his lamented lady had also taken a huge cantle out of his income, by unexpectedly exercising a forgotten right, and he had now to call on his wits more sharply than ever

This is an unpleasant duty for a man about thirty-five; in younger years it is well enough, but at such a period of life enjoyment of blessings obtained, or the quiet pursuit of objects in an allotted sphere, is more to be desired than preying loosely on the world.

Sir Edmund had now taken up his abode at Granite Hall. He knew Mr. Ponderous

slightly, but Lady Julia very intimately indeed; and as her ladyship was a despotic queen at home, Sir Edmund, who was a great favourite, was of course most welcome there.

Mrs. Arden, although she did not like it, and Katherine who liked it even less, were occasional guests of Lady Julia's. Her ladyship was indeed a fine woman, with a beautiful countenance which would have been more engaging than it was, but for a certain sharp expression of dominion which it had acquired by relieving the tedium of her condition by despitefully treating her husband, and persecuting him.

And here Sir Edmund, attended by his trusty Frenchman Monsieur Auguste, now resided and had installed himself master of the house; a state of things which Agrippa was by no means sorry for, as he well knew he should be treated better under any body's dominion than under his wife's.

It was a distinct trait in the character of Mr. Ponderous, that the more oppressed he was at

home, the more despotic he became in Skerryton. His dinner parties, by his lady's forbearance, were still permitted to him, and being quite sensible of the value put upon his invitations, as well as the effect which any marked exclusion from them would have, he converted his hospitality into an instrument of terror.

Even when he got a few of these people together, they were all in fear and trembling lest they should offend: if any one inadvertently asked to send his plate for venison a second time, before Agrippa had had time to carve for himself, the look he would give the unhappy guest, would almost annihilate him, and be spoken of next day in whispers all over Skerryton,—if any unguarded man should so far forget himself as to ask for a whole leg of a pheasant, when there were but two such birds on the table, and twenty people at dinner, Agrippa, reddening to the ears, would mutter as he cut it off, "well sir, that is a moderate quantity,"—or ask to be helped to the last fragments of a brace of

wood-cocks when Agrippa's own plate still was clean, he would look daggers at him; on one occasion indeed, the delinquent was so terrified, that he offered to return his plate. All this afforded much amusement to Lady Julia—which was indeed the chief reason why she permitted such dinner parties at all; not so however to Sir Edmund Arden, he had *once* indeed remained to drink his wine, with Mr. Ponderous and his guests, and listened with patience to the small affairs of Skerryton,—but he never did so again. He always retired with Lady Julia, and had a cool bottle of claret brought him from the cellar, which he drank in the drawing-room conversing with her ladyship.

Mrs. Arden had got down her heavy green Nabob-looking carriage from London, a gentleman-like butler, with a white waistcoat and a load of plate, her quiet coachman, and two bronze-faced servants, who had created considerable alarm in Skerryton, and been mentioned in the county paper. She found the

air of the place remarkably cheerful and bracing, and there being no physician within thirty miles round, she began to get into a tolerable state of health. So much so indeed, that she took a lease of the cottage for two years, having first extracted a promise from Katherine that she would remain with her, provided, as the old lady had the kindness to open the condition by, she did not accept a husband within that time.

And now as Mrs. General Arden was very fond of her nephew—which the said nephew knew exactly and reckoned on; and as her seemly pair of stall fed blacks had need of exercise, to say nothing of the coachman, who had a sleepy tendency to apoplexy—that last infirmity of easy lived men, it followed that Lady Julia was favoured with more morning calls, than even Sir Edmund himself had anticipated; and her ladyship, although she thought the widow of the general a most decided bore, and Katherine a most offensively beautiful prude,

who had had the presumption to refuse the best match open on the peerage, was compelled, as Sir Edmund liked these visits, to countenance and encourage them.

And months stole slowly by, and summer came upon them all—and the walled gardens with the clear stream that ran on pebbles through them, and the tunnels that pierced the noble carriage drive, and the newly formed fruits, with the blossoms withering from them on the sunny brick walls, and the beautiful flower garden, with its weedless mould, and the thick buds opening amid the fresh green leaves and the warm aromatic odour of the rich man's pleasure grounds; and the brilliant plumed pheasant whirring upwards on their path, and the wild birds' music in the dense green woods, summer was come again, and the splendour of nature was fair in this quiet spot, which the grey mountains clustering in the back ground looked gently down upon. It was in truth a most noble place—here and there a peep of the

blue calm sea around it all, mountains or richly rising grounds, wood and river, sunny hill-side and verdant dale, old trees which, had they language, could have told strange records of the Bruce's days, and wastes on which deeds of blood had been committed in broken times now thickly covered over with summer smelling firs.

Katherine began to like the place, it was new to an English eye and in keeping with the associations of romance, which all the changes in this world of ours, cannot strip from the young heart's dreams—it was a most glorious spot, and yet it belonged to Agrippa Ponderous, and he gave his dinners there.

One evening, at that time of the year when the twilights are so still, that the very curs do not bark in them, one quiet twilight, when the sun had just sank, and the half moon was pale in the sky which was blue and lovely still, Katherine Brandon had accompanied Sir Edmund Arden to those pleasure grounds. They

were alone, no ear was near them, to which the gentle wind could carry a whisper; no sound broke on them but that of the flickering leaves, and the softened noise of their own footsteps, when they left the green sward, and passed over the gravelled path.

CHAPTER XIII.

What passed between Katherine Brandon and Sir Edmund Arden in the garden at Granite Hall.

"Do you remember," said Sir Edmund, pausing, "a twilight walk we had together some months ago, when you predicted all those changes in these scenes around us, which have come so fully now?"

"I do," said Katherine thoughtfully.

"And it would seem by that shadow on your countenance," resumed the other, "that the time has brought less happiness with it, than you then believed it would have done."

"That is a common thing," answered the other evasively.

"To those who follow phantoms certainly, but not I hope to you."

"And why not to me?" demanded Katherine raising her beautiful eyes to his.

"Because you are too young, too beautiful—nay pardon me if I speak sincerely—too well endowed with the means of commanding every gratification which is dear to the heart, to see a hope blasted if it had not been founded on a shadow—and on that, I know you are too proud to rest an anxious one."

"What has pride to do with unfounded hopes?" asked Katherine.

"Little, if these hopes are on ourselves; but much if they depend on others."

"You speak riddles, Sir Edmund."

"I then mystify what is very clear, and since you flatter me by listening, I will expound to you what I mean, although I could wish that

your attention was given to an orator more worthy of it than I."

"Pray let me understand you, Sir Edmund."

"Briefly then, lady fair—but I am no oracle, as my good aunt is—by the bye how very well the old lady is looking—if our hopes are founded on our own means of attaining them, without injury to self-love, to dignity, to pride if you will—if they are founded even on what accident may throw upon our fortunes; they can have no element which a mind like yours might refuse to cherish—but if they look with an anxious eye to another, they can only be preserved by a surrender, which the heart, when unswayed by passion, makes the lothest and the last."

"I do not understand all this."

"It is not such natures as yours Miss Brandon," resumed Sir Edmund, in a tone which seemed to give melody to the subtle poetry of the world-forgetting scene around them—"it

is not such natures as yours, that can read the consequences of debasement aptly."

"Debasement!" repeated Katherine, becoming more and more interested, "I am farther in the dark than ever."

"We are speaking of shadows," said the other smiling, "and I know they are darkness to such minds as yours. But as you seem interested in them, I shall become a philosopher, were it but for this evening only, and enlighten, as I may, this darkness which does you honour. But let us go to the seat under that beech, for Socrates himself never said a wise thing standing. What a glorious night this is!"

"And now," resumed the handsome sage, when they were seated under the lofty tree "the word debasement startled you—or at least you thought it unworthily employed."

"I did indeed—but then I do not quite understand to what you have applied it."

"It's application, Miss Brandon, is far ranged,

but I will confine it to this—because it is a condition, which a nature like your's could hardly from its own promptings picture—to surrender before homage has tired out reserve,—to a ready equality of communion in which weakness, though a charm, pride calls on to be wary, to that miserable feeling with which some of your sex are endowed, which induces them to step from the throne on which nature has set them, to welcome the worshipper, almost ere he kneels—to that blind tendrilism, which twines as readily round a reed, which will break, and tear it in the first wind with which circumstances change the atmosphere of life, as round an assured and wisely chosen tree, simply because it must twine round something, were it even a sleeping snake,—to that poor preference which charms for the flattered hour, but soon makes the recipient, despise alike the giver and the gift, because reason tells him that any other might as easily have won it, had he but thought it worth his while to put on the pilgrim's cloak,

to that gentle flexibility which, while it ministers to self-love by covering known faults, with the green leaves of a twining stem, is soon for the like cause felt to be unworthy to be prized, because flexible to the last, a similar slight thing to that which bent it, could slacken it and make it twine round another, with its feeble force again—the dog loves it's master without a cause, and no man is flattered by such an attachment, because it was just as ready to be bestowed upon another as on him, and although the most honest love in the world, let his master give the dog away, and it will love another in the same fashion,—for the brute must love some one. This feeling is debasement, is it not? does it not pervert the sweetest attribute of woman,—is she not traitress to herself, when she loves without reason, or from a cause which any knave could offer in an hour. Has not nature given her judgment, and a pride which hallows the sweetest instincts of her heart with sensitive reserve—is not she richly, bountifully,

gloriously endowed, is she not the only known image of all we can embody of purity, and love? the only real prize in this tempest-beaten life? and does she not debase herself and the noble purpose of the bountiful Omnipotence that has placed her here, as the only holy object of that homage, which our nature prompts us to pay to earthly things; when she casts aside the sweet mystery of her fashioning, and steps from her altar to worship with the slave?"

"She does indeed," said Katherine thoughtfully, "and yet we may have pity, and even love for such an one, as you have described."

"The world has a greater capacity for pity than it has for respect," said Sir Edmund coldly, and that is in perfect keeping with their occasions, but now that we have pursued this subject so far, what if the world can pity such a frail perverter of noble endowments, or he on whom she cast her eyes in such worship may also pity, and in some cases even love her for it,—there is no love with pity, which a proud woman would

care to have,—no real attachment in man, which calls on his gratitude rather than his praise. It is an error Miss Brandon, one of those which often canker the purest minds, yet it is an error and a vile one, in those who acknowledge it, and still rest claims on the perversion of worthy things, like the weak man ruined, who tells the beggars who herd with him, how hospitable he has been!"

"It is a sad picture," said Katherine, "and has come strangely from a slight remark. It is a most sad picture, and it may be truthfully, yet to me it seems painfully drawn. And even now, with a woman's feeling, I must believe that it is the treachery of your sex, rather than the errors of ours, which creates it all."

"Were there no errors in the one, there could hardly be treachery in the other," answered the baronet, "or at least such treachery would be a very harmless thing. Diamonds must be dug for, and pearls do not float upon the stream, if jewels were found on high-ways, they would

lose their price, and if woman's love be given lightly, the recipient will doubt its worth, and most justly too. No one values the way-side flower which any hand might have gathered, however beautiful it may be; and no man esteems the partial fondness, which has abandoned the best gift of life to his keeping, if it was surrendered without the watchfulness of that pride which makes the gift a sacred thing."

"But if she does know his worth," said Katherine, now excited to a degree of emotion, of which she herself was not aware, "if she feels that the person she loves, is worthy of her—if reason tells her all this, and that no one can be more worthy of the love, which she does not scruple to give—surely then, there can be no room for such cold after thoughts as these."

"Not," answered the other with brightening eyes, "if he craves for such a return. You remember we were speaking of that hope which looks with slavish earnestness to others—that hope, the calamitous results of which, have

been coined into proverbs, that hope which is indeed a shadow. Not of the generous reward of devotion, when the patient worshipper kneels at the chosen shrine. But," added he in a voice that ran like ice through the hearer's heart, "if the idol even in thought, must go forth in search of her imaginary idolater—if she must beckon him to accept the gift which only his homage should obtain—if she must in her own imagination create the ideal passion with which she longs him to be inflamed—collecting isolated matters into a surprised heap, which naturally knew no such unity; and placing her sickly majesty on such a loosely constructed throne, it will fall, and she with it!" Katherine did not speak.

"Woman's love is a sacred thing," continued Sir Edmund, "and it were well if she knew thoroughly what makes it so. When profferred, it becomes a burden, an odious burden; but when obtained justly, it more than recompences for every hardship which endurance must ever

feel. It is in truth a heavenly prize, it is either that, or a most worthless gift, for mere attachment, passion, even devotion can be given, and *are* frequently given by the vile. Such a feeling is no more to be compared to the love, which the heart of man craves for, than the banquet taper to the glorious sun—poor, poor, is such a flame, although it may burn, till death shut it out. Love is a fruit which in a proud woman's heart grows on lofty branches, which spread themselves to heaven, not hanging by the way-side of life for any grasp, and honoured by the cold hand that plucks it. The wish to be loved is a gentle feeling, and beautiful in woman, when she hoards it till its time, but in its own nature it is nothing—the dog shares it, and the slave rests on it his most worthy boast. But to be loved by those whom not accident, but reason calls on her to love—calls on her not from a knowledge of worth alone, but from the unquestioned surrender of the whole heart to her,—when the heart of man is cheered by

such a pure and gladdening flame, he will esteem it the best and dearest of heaven's gifts, and will requite it, aye Katherine a thousand fold!"

Still Katherine was silent but her cheek was pale, and the movements of her bosom restless. Her eyes were cast on the ground, and her ears drank in Sir Edmund's words. Their very tone was subduing, they stole upon her feelings subtily, and Sir Edmund saw that her pride was stung.

"I cannot tell why I speak so to-night," continued this crafty man, "but the theme on which you are content to listen to me, is one which interests us all. Woman's love, let us speak of it as we may, throned kings are often prouder of, than of the dominions which the barbarism of folly permits them to call their own. It is a strange mystery! with paradise and perdition, alternately cheering and startling it in perspective, and making its coy course devious, and ill to be defined. Now, that I am

in the vein, I could speak of love for hours. All men can, for as with the mysteries of religion, hardly two thinking beings regard it alike, and this is not to be wondered at, as its character is as diversified as the countenances of mankind. But in woman the mystery is most curious and complete, for is it not strange, Katherine, is it not most strange that in her case such slight things can change its nature from honour to the dust, and that your sex should be so much more ready to imagine it bestowed than ours, ours that can lose almost nothing by such an error, and yours that must lose every thing by it—should be so prompt to believe themselves loved, when in most cases it was but its semblance that they reckoned on."

"Is this so?" demanded Katherine quickly, not thinking what she asked.

"It is unfortunately no matter of doubt. Nay it is a most gallant and cheerful thing—it is one of the first accomplishments which a young man studies, to pass this base but highly

polished coin for sterling gold. He boasts of it—respects himself for the power it evinces, and the world shrugs its shoulders and smiles."

"But such conduct is most vile," said Katherine indignantly.

"It has its limits. To deceive by marked professions of regard, is clumsy, and therefore considered very wrong, but to do so tacitly, is another thing. It has its excitement too, and is found to be a very agreeable thing, like victories at cards, or the triumph of hunting a poor worthless beast to death. It ministers to vanity, and keeps the faculties active by exercise, and even can boast its moral, for it quickens that knowledge, which makes a man esteem female strength of character, and despise weakness amid its tender feelings. There is no wisdom like that which is taught us by fools."

Katherine could not speak.

"Yes, it would be vile," continued Sir Edmund if exercised in the golden age, but the term is harshly applied to it in such an age as

ours. It is the majesty of imbecility in a woman to trust to appearances of regard, and to build hopes of devotion, constancy, and all the bright train of heart-worship from mere tokens, the trivial nature of which it is reckoned an accomplishment to conceal by constructive earnestness, and the woman who does so is weak indeed. Weakness! alas Katherine, it is a painful name for woman—a thin cloak for all we despise, a decent curtain for all we detest, a paltry covering which charity throws over odious things!"

Katherine rose and took Sir Edmund's arm in silence. He too said nothing now, for he saw that he had alarmed her fears, as fully as her pride, and cared not to disturb the impression he had made.

CHAPTER XIV.

How accident and design begin to make the course of Sir Edmund's love run smoothly.

ONE morning, a few days after the evening alluded to in the preceeding chapter, Lady Julia was engaged near the breakfast table, reading a thick packet of letters which she had just received from her sister Lady Felton, Sir Edmund was reading a newspaper, and Agrippa was eating a turkey's egg.

"The "Virgin Purity" sails to day for

London," remarked Mr. Ponderous to Sir Edmund.

"That is not the best place for it to go to," observed the baronet, carelessly.

"I have some granite aboard of her. My quarry now produces the best granite in Scotland. Seven large stones, twelve feet by seventeen. I hope the chain of the crane will not break."

"I hope not," said Sir Edmund.

"It is a good schooner, the Virgin. She was named the 'Virgin Purity,' because she was built of well seasoned Baltic timber, not a piece of green wood in her."

"She is a very good ship I have no doubt," said the baronet, keeping his eyes on the paper.

"She is indeed. And yet if the chain should break, I am afraid the granite would damage her hold." I have been thinking of it all the morning.

"Pray don't worry every body to death, with stories about that useless quarry of yours,"

said Lady Julia angrily, seeing that Sir Edmund was being disturbed while reading the paper—"but eat your breakfast quietly." Agrippa did so, and then left the room.

"What a budget Clara has sent me this time," observed Lady Julia, folding up the last enclosure of the packet. "Here are seven letters, and upon my word they are very pretty things."

"Another *liason* of the accomplished baroness;" inquired Sir Edmund indifferently.

"It is. Upon my word Clara has such luck—it is quite unbearable."

"Nay Ju, you are in no humour to pay compliments this morning, I see."

Lady Julia laughed. "It is not that, Edmund, but how the crafty thing manages to have so *very* many. Is it not odious?"

"It is very bad," assented the baronet suppressing a yawn.

"Now just hear some of these letters; Clara sent them to vex me—I know she did."

"Oh Ju, I dare say I have heard all that they can say often enough, and so have you too, if the truth must needs be told. How many votes can your husband command in this county?"

"Pray don't ask me that, I am sick to death of this county, and of every body in it."

"That is no answer to my question Ju, how many votes—think now, you can guess if you like—does dear Grippy influence, or command?"

"Why, as to his influence, I should think it was small enough, except among those people in Skerryton. But do you think of going into Parliament, Edmund?"

"I must do something in that way, I assure you I am threatened with an infringement of my natural liberty, and I have no mind to go abroad."

"We could go too—" observed Lady Julia.

"That would not answer," said the baronet coldly—then seeing the effect his words had

produced, he added—"And what does Clara say?"

"Oh! no end of gossip. It is odd too, for her letters are generally short, but it would seem her heart has suffered a little in this last love affair of hers. Pray let me read some of those letters to you. Upon my word they are very pretty."

"I shall be more delighted by hearing you read them, than by any thing they can contain I know," said the baronet.

"Edmund, Edmund," said Lady Julia, "we are past all that now!"

"Why really I believe we are," assented the baronet, falling back in his cushioned chair, crossing his legs, and making up his mind to endure the infliction of the letters.

Lady Julia read three, beginning "Dear Lady Felton," but the fourth, in consequence as it seemed from a reproach at this measured style of address, began "Dear Clara"—and were really written with considerable tenderness

and with exquisite tact. The last particularly gave an ingenious turn to the cause of their separation, well calculated to atone for it. Lady Julia declared it was one of the finest hings she had ever read, and even Sir Edmund, who, although he guessed more closely, was also compelled to declare that it did its writer the highest credit.

"And pray who is this person?" demanded the baronet.

"Nay it would not be fair to tell that, although the name is unknown to me."

"What is it? perhaps I may know it—and if I do, you shall have the advantage of my knowledge."

"He subscribes himself, Walter Osborne."

The blood rushed to Sir Edmund's cheek.

"Give me those letters Julia," he said in an altered tone.

"And why? Edmund."

"I—I wish to transcribe them. I—I like the

style—Does not Katherine Brandon come here to-night?"

"She does," said Lady Julia peevishly, "and your saintly aunt with her. But why do you ask for Clara's letters?"

"Give me but the last four, beginning, 'dear Clara,' you may retain the addresses, there are a thousand dear Clara's in England. Nay never pout for it. There now! I know you are not angry with me. Come, I will ride with you to Prior's Cross, as you asked me yesterday. The day is fine. Now go and get ready. Once again Ju.—Now go!"

"Auguste," said Sir Edmund, when he returned from his ride, "you must visit Miss Brandon's maid this evening."

Auguste bowed.

"These four letters she must place where her mistress will see them on her return from this house to night, and—what is the girl's name?"

Do you mean her real name, Monsieur, or the name she passes by, here?"

"Any name, any name—but never mind that. When Miss Brandon inquires how the letters got there, this devoted votary of yours is not to know—"

Again Mr. Gilbert bowed.

"You will wait there till the ladies arrive, and when you ascertain that the letters have reached their destination, come back here as hard as you can ride. There they are; don't take my horse, he is tired, take Mr. Ponderous' mare."

Monsieur Auguste took the letters with another profound bow, and retired.

Sir Edmund loved Katherine Brandon; there can be no question of that; and yet such was his idea of human nature, that he would perhaps have much scrupled to make any great sacrifice for her attachment, or indeed for any thing else. He admired the purity of her nature, and was inflamed by the knowledge of the rich treasure of affection which her character possessed—he knew also that her estate

was a most desirable thing for a man in his circumstances, and to do him justice, he had never desired any thing so ardently as he now did to possess such a wife and lands. He saw that a girlish fondness for another still influenced her mind; and it may be in his younger days he would have spurned the pursuit of such a fettered heart, but now his passions and his interest were embarked on the venture, and confident in his power he resolved to pursue it. He was a most warm passioned, and most selfish man—a union of character more often met with in the world than in books. As matters went with him, he was compelled to risk his fortunes on the cast of a die, he had no leisure to look around him, and this necessity, the feelings true to the old proverb, influenced the conclusions even of such wisdom as his.

To remove the impression which still tramelled the feelings of the beautiful heiress, was his first thought. That achieved, her heart, he considered, would be readily surrendered to him,

and he might influence it as he liked. The recent death of his respected lady, who by-the-bye his late mother had richly bribed him to marry from funds which the fortune of the bride elect were called on to provide—this unhappy gentlewoman had been too recently gathered to her partridge shooting sires, to permit him to enter the lists, as an even tacitly acknowledged lover—and this exemption of relation the accomplished baronet turned richly to account. His present efforts were but to make Katherine's feelings free, and that done, he did not doubt the issue.

In the evening Katherine and the respectable oriental widow were drawn along the hard dry turnpike road to Granite Hall, by the potential pair of blacks. It was a warm, mellow hour, the carriage glittered under sunbeams flashing from its varnished panels as the domestic vehicle glided under the tall hedge trees, the white gloved coachman held the reins fairly, and the Hindoo behind, read a newspaper on

the rumble. The labourer in the field rested on his spade, and pondered awhile on the inequality of fortune, as his grey eye pursued the glancing coach; the farmer's boy raised his bonnet on the pathway; and the peasant girl dropped a courtesy, as dust rolled by—young gentlemen of Skerryton, on smartly cropped horses, passed the coach, and from their knowledge of the country contrived to meet it again, then walked their horses towards the town pensively thinking what a beautiful being Katherine Brandon was. The Skerryton angler, as he saw it approach the bridge, waded mid-way into the stream, lighted his cigar, and pretended to fish comfortably, in an obscure idea that such an exquisite passion for the rod might peradventure make the English heiress think of him with regard, and young ladies in phaetons, observed to each other as they passed the carriage that Miss Brandon was very pale, and near thirty at the least.

All these impressions were unknown and

unheeded by the ladies in the carriage, as well as by the red-faced coachman on the box, and the Hindoo behind; quietly they pursued the turnpike tenor of their way, until they arrived at Granite Hall, where Lady Julia received them with smiles.

They dined as people dine in the country, on warm days, when sun-shine and summer are around them. The gardens richly spreading before the windows, the luxurious atmosphere stealing through gauzy curtains, the reposing quiet of the gentle evening, and the listlessness of objects in rooms at an hour like this, made every body prefer a walk in the grounds, to indoor tedium, which the bright light reproached them for.

Sir Edmund once more had Katherine on his arm, and they both almost unconsciously proceeded to the seat under the beech-tree.

"How magnificient is this prospect around us," observed the former in his rich quiet voice.

"I have seldom looked on a finer evening or a more beautiful scene."

"It is indeed very beautiful," said Katherine; "Many points of the landscape remind me of some of the approaches to Switzerland."

"Switzerland is a petrified region," said the other, "which its own green valleys fret under, a cold pent-up land, with summer at its feet. This country—not where we now are, but far to the north-west of that line of blue hills, has scenes far more magnificent than Switzerland has to boast. The mountains, with the broad Atlantic throbbing at their bases—the wild deep valley where painters never trod—the majestic loneliness, the grandeur of the silence in those noble scenes. I should like to visit them again, Katherine, with you."

"I understand they are very magnificent," observed the other.

"It is the true land of poetry and of love. A country for the heart's hermitage; let us sit down here, and I will describe some of those

scenes to you, that is, if you would like to listen to me."

"Oh with pleasure," said the other, who really did like to hear Sir Edmund, as well as felt a relief in having her mind removed from other thoughts. She sat down beside him willingly.

And Sir Edmund might have charmed a more unwilling ear. He gradually drew pictures, which fed the imagination warmly; they were full of poetry, and he took care to mingle with them episodes of love. Katherine listened to those legends until her mind became subdued, and its feelings almost in the fascinator's power.

An influence crept upon her, which she could not shake off, and soon ceased to care to do so. The subtle instincts of her gentle nature became excited, and a tear at times rose to her eyes, for the impression of the moment affected her like a spell. There was no bitterness in Sir Edmund's reflections now, no cold philosophy of life, in the words that fell like music on

her ears, time passed unnoted, as it passes in a delicious dream.

She took his arm to join the others, that were walking in the grounds, and, as they slowly proceeded towards them, a thought which she could not control, and would not define, flashed upon her mind. It was a dangerous, but a frequent one in woman—the subtle seed of many of her woes, for had she given it language, it would have been, "this is a man that I think I could have loved!"

CHAPTER XV.

Of the curious matters which took place at Spare-Bone House, and how Walter Osborne with difficulty escaped a declaration of love.

Mr. Onesepherus Death displayed his character in strange lights to his new assistants. The system of the school also struck them as being of a singular kind, although for all that, it was a most common one. Walter was too much depressed to be amused, with what in other days would have had that effect, Mr. Buckhurst was by no means of an observant disposition, and Monsieur Pompadour, who was a

citizen of the world, had long ceased to be surprised at any thing.

Like many other tall men, Onesepherus was very fond of a mincing, courtly step, particularly when he took out the boys on what he called scientific excursions. These were, to parade them to the market-place, and make them form a double line opposite the church spire. Mr. Death would then with a quadrant in his hand pass through the line of boys, take as he said the angle of elevation of the weather-cock, then retiring backwards for twenty paces, take the angle at this second point, both which he would make one of the boys note down. These exhibitions generally collected crowds, which was all that Onesepherus wanted, as indeed he was totally ignorant of trigonometry, and the angles, as he called them, were imaginary ones. But of course the effect on the public was the same.

Another of his scientific excursions was to the common, where with chains, levels, and

other mathematical instruments, he pretended to teach the boys practical land measuring, a thing that told very well with the farmers—another to take them out at night, with a great number of lanterns, and an old telescope, defective in the field-glass, to look at the stars; and the last and most curious of these excursions, was a habit he had of taking them now and then to collect mushrooms, (Mrs. Death made excellent ketchup, and supplied three dealers in London with the commodity), and when two or three baskets full had been collected, Onesepherus would take up one, cut it in pieces with his pen-knife, and then read to the boys a transcript from Goldsmith's "Earth and Animated Nature."

Yet things went on for some time quietly. The boys did not grumble, nor the ushers complain, although they had both many grievances to submit to of a vexatious kind. In the first place the former were most scantily fed, yet by an ingenious process which made themselves

consenting parties to it. Onesepherus who gave out that he had a weak stomach, always took hot luncheon, that is to say, dined snugly with Mrs. Death and Violet at one o'clock, and at two, presided at the acknowledged dinner table, where he said a long grace, and used a very sharp carving knife. Every body was helped twice to a spread out slice of a fine gauzy texture from the large joint before him, and every body was distinctly asked if he would have any more, a thing no one for secret reasons dared to do—the vegetables were distributed by the ushers, and the boys left the table hungry. Yet as Mrs. Death always said, there it was for them, if they chose to ask for it, so of course nobody had a right to complain. And the poor little fellows saw that would be useless, and accordingly appeased the claims of hunger, by buying gingerbread and stale fruit from a red nosed little woman who paid Mr. Death half a crown a week, for having the monopoly of his school yard By these means, assisted by heavy cakes

sent them from their friends at home, the boys managed to preserve themselves alive, but the ushers, not having this resource, would have perished altogether, had not Mr, Buckhurst, the second day, played Mr. Death with his own cards, and 'troubled him again,' five successive times, as well as sending away his beer, and asking for some that had no water in it. After this, matters as regarded the assistants, were more judiciously arranged at the dinner table; and all went on harmoniously as to that; except on one occasion, when, in the absence of Mr. Death and his family, Mr. Buckhurst had to carve. That day was one of clover to the boys. Not only was the joint wholly diminished, but seven pounds of beefsteaks, which he made the servants go to the butcher's for, and broil, while the juvenile members of the company waited for them—he also courteously asked the boys if they liked their beer, to which they all replying in the negative,—he immediately ordered what was

before them to be thrown out, and twelve jugs to be drawn, and brought to the table with all haste, and without any adulteration,—he even whistled in a brace of pointers from the street, opening the window for their accommodation, and gave them the bones to pick, and when all was over, delighted the boys by singing a song in which, after the first stanza, they all joined with screams of joy, at the chorus,

"Of all the girls that ere I did see,
Cherry cheeked Patty is the girl for me!"

Walter and the Frenchman were too much amused with the scene, to take any decided part in controling it, but when Mr. Death heard of it, it nearly drove him frantic. "Sivin pounds of prime steaks," said the servants, "twelve jugs of beer, and the hodiousest noise that ever mortal heard. It was dreadful!"

Mr. Death ground his teeth, but saw it prudent to say nothing of the matter to Mr. Buckhurst, or to any body else except his wife; and only resolved to turn the screw a little tighter

on other things by way of compensation. These were various. In the first place, he made additional bargains with vagabond lecturers on phrenology, animal magnetism, botany, and the slave trade, who were in the habit of coming to the town, and who for a matter of a few shillings, would admit his school, Mr. Death charging half a crown in each boy's bill, for such intellectual treats,—he also charged a similar sum for donations to the missionaries, sent by himself, as he informed the boys, anonymously, from the principle of not letting the right hand know what the left hand did—and his right hand would have been sharp indeed, if it could have discovered when he employed his left hand for any such purpose,—nay the late affair made him so very vulture-eyed, that an old pensioner whom he had in his service, for cleaning the boy's shoes and such like duties, did not escape him, for having caught the unfortunate man one day entering the house with a meat-pie in his hand, which he had just given a shilling for, at a

neighbouring pastry-cook's,—the poor fellow having the intention of regaling himself, it being his birth-day, Mr. Death asked him what he had paid for it, and the other afraid to tell the truth, said it had cost him sixpence.

"Well," said Onesepherus, "there is sixpence for you, take the pie to Mrs. Death, and tell her to keep it warm for me, and you can buy another for yourself."

This was bad enough for the pensioner, but the mischief did not stop here. It unfortunately happened, that Onesepherus was very fond of pastry—or pretended to be so, and the old man was sent out day after day with sixpences, for which he was obliged to bring in shilling pies. This became a serious thing for the pensioner, and he was at last compelled to tell Mr. Death that he must look out for another servant, as he really could not *afford* to keep his situation. On this the persecution ceased.

A man so fruitful of resources, easily found

means to indemnify himself for the havoc in his arrangements, which Mr. Buckhurst had made, and being deeply engaged in revising his poem of Jane Shore, he soon forgot the matter altogether. On this great work he rested magnificent hopes, particularly as he had made out Mrs. Shore to have been a prudent woman, a thing which he thought would be pleasing to the king, and looked forward with anxious hope to the day when he should be presented at court, and put an elegantly bound copy of the work into his majesty's hands. The pantomine of this ceremony he was much in the custom of repeating, when he was by himself, particularly the art of retiring backwards from the monarch's presence, which he imagined was a matter of some difficulty. Indeed so much did this engross his mind, that he was in the habit of getting up in the night and practising the ceremony.

Miss Violet Death had become more and more enamoured of Walter, and gave him a

good deal to do in mending pens for her at out-of-the-way hours, and did every thing else which her imagination could suggest to call forth a sympathetic feeling in the mathematical assistant, but without any apparent effect. Mrs. Death saw all this, but was too much accustomed to what she called, "Violet's ways," to pay very much attention to it, and Onesepherus had far too much to do with his epic poem, and the rehearsal of his *debut* at court to have much leisure to attend to any other matters.

And so things went on in the dull routine of dreary duties, which Walter felt most irksome and heart-sickening. Mr. Buckhurst too, and the Frenchman, were seriously depressed; the former disliked the confinement and the beer, and the latter, who had been nine months a prisoner of war in Prussia, walked about as if suffering for some political offence.

Horatio was the first again to disturb the melancholy harmony of things. When he

took the boys out to walk they were generally seen playing near some public-house, into which the classical assistant had stepped, and where he would continue until it was time to go home, and the people in the neighbourhood of the school, would now and then, at night, see a boy let down from one of the windows, by means of one or three sheets fastened together, and in a short time return with a pot of ale and a pipe, which Horatio would with difficulty manage to hoist up, with his half dressed envoy, holding a paper of tobacco between his teeth.

To get to this window it was necessary to pass through a long room—a place intended for spare school beds, but now only used by Mr. Death, for practising his elocution in. It happened one night that just as Horatio had safely landed the boy at the window and was preparing to return, he was startled at perceiving Mr. Death in his night-cap and slippers, but otherwise in a state of comparative nudity, walking about in this selfsame apartment. He

saw him step on tiptoe into the middle of the room, suddenly kneel before two chairs placed one above the other, and bend forward as if attempting to kiss a monarch's hand, in doing so overturning the chairs, one of which struck him a sharp blow on his night-cap. And this moment would have been an excellent opportunity for Horatio to have passed through, but he was so much taken by surprise, and so was the little boy too, that neither of them could stir.

In a minute or two, the chairs were replaced as before, and Mr. Death, after retiring to the wall, again advanced on tiptoe towards them. Horatio now passed on stealthily, carrying the pot of ale, and the little boy following him, in great terror, carrying the sheets. They saw Mr. Death advance, kneel again to the chairs and present them with a book, make a movement once more as if kissing hands, then stand erect as if listening to the comments of His Majesty. All would have been well still if

Mr. Buckhurst had even now passed on quickly to the opposite door, but believing Mr. Death had lost his senses, he paused again, and before he knew what he was about, Onesepherus in retiring backwards came right against him, and overturned the ale. The boy ran away.

"What do you do out of bed, so late, sir?" demanded Onesepherus furiously.

"I never like to strike a man in his own house," said Horatio, indignant at the loss of his ale, "but next time you ask that question let it be in a more civil tone."

"My dear friend," said Onesepherus cooled at once, "may I venture to enquire why I see you before me at this hour of the night, with a pot of beer in your hand?"

"There is no beer in it—the devil's curse on your capering! don't you see it is all on the floor?"

Mr. Death did look, and certainly saw that the floor was flooded, and Mr. Buckhurst retired in dudgeon, wondering at himself for

having endured his misfortune without inflicting personal chastisement on the spot, and even feeling a little uneasy at sleeping in the same house with Mr. Death, in case of fire.

But next morning nothing was said of the matter, the little boy indeed had been so much scared at seeing Mr. Death perform such antics in the silence of the night, that he was in a state of violent delirium until day break, and during the whole of the following day was too ill to leave his bed. He however soon recovered as the holidays were approaching, and for the same reason Mr. Death endured in silence the offences of his classical assistant.

And now came the twentieth of June, that bright day in the schoolboy's calendar—letters had been written, and the pencil lines rubbed carefully out, letters full of copy-book maxims and most dutiful expressions of regard to anxious parents at home—containing also some secret information of Mr. Death's literary progress—the following information appearing

in them all—"You will also be delighted to hear that I have ascertained that our respected master has nearly completed the revision of his epic poem of 'Jane Shore,' and has, I understand, made some important additions to his essay on the 'Improvement of Time.'" The hot supper came with the negus of imitation port, the crowd of candles and the nosegays blooming uneasily round them—and other elements of ricketty happiness which the boys, in the ardour of hope and prospective emancipation, believed in their hearts was most festive and fine.

Mr. Death, as was his custom, read an address on the occasion, touching heavily on the advantages of education, particularly those of English language and punctuation; observing that it was only in such an establishment as his, where such was to be obtained, and that many young gentlemen who had spent years at Heton and Arrow had been sent to him to learn to speak and write the English language

with propriety. He added that they ought *all* to embody the following sentence in their morning and evening prayers—and which they would require to repeat by heart to him on the following day, as the last task of the session. "And I humbly offer up my fervent thanks that my indulgent parents have placed me at Mr. Death's classical, mathematical, commercial and agricultural academy, where in addition to approved tuition in the dead letters, I am instructed in English language and punctuation; a desideratum seldom or never met with in other schools—and that my respected master, a poet, a philosopher, and a man of deep reading and elocution, watches over my mental culture, while his amiable wife Barbara, as I am informed her christian name is—which I mention from a desire *to be explicit*—acts the part of a second mother to me, giving me Epsom salts every fortnight, and supplying me with other domestic comforts, too tedious to mention."

With all Mr. Buckhurst's faults, as he could

be called The Reverend Horatio Buckhurst, B.A. in the bills, Mr. Death engaged him for the next half year, Horatio having stipulated for certain indulgences in the way of beer, and the liberty of hours of solace two nights in the week, at any tavern his experience might induce him to select—and Walter having nothing better for it, also consented to return.

The reverend gentleman met his old acquaintance, the coachman, who proffered from good fellowship to take him to town for nothing; and accordingly started on the following day for the metropolis on the box seat, which the driver with some difficulty had kept vacant for his friend all the way down—but Walter dreading the writs out against him, could not venture to go there. And where to go, he knew not; but to remain was out of the question—Mr. Death hinted as much as that.

He resolved to go to Skerryton—a long journey for an usher's purse; but he heard that a vessel was on the point of sailing for Scotland

from a neighbouring seaport—and many influences prompted him to this. It was after all a somewhat desperate choice, the state of his finances would make it necessary for him to walk many a long Scottish mile, and the balance of the venture in prudence's reckonings was false. Still the heart, as the French wit says, dupes the head, and will do so till human nature is changed for the better or the worse.

So Walter resolved to start on the following day, by a coach which would take him to the seaport, where the vessel, the day after that, would sail for a most prudent and commercial town on the Scottish eastern coast, but which was, however, upwards of a hundred miles from the interesting locality of Skerryton. A tough journey for a foot passenger, but Walter was young and strong, and his heart would spur him on, in spite of weary limbs, and the cold reckonings of granite in office, registering miles. And of this he thought little now.

That evening Miss Violet Death came unto

him. He was in the garden watching a corpulent spider, handling the lines of a long ranged web, which swung securely in the summer breeze—he saw the gloomy insect poised in accomplished security, hold the threads and guide them as a stout coachman of a sedentary habit manages, with confident tact, the movements of a restless team. And it is somewhat strange, that the forlorn always come in contact with spiders. The debtor in his cell, the bankrupt in his back-parlour, and the starving artizan, in his thoughtful hours manage somehow to make the acquaintance of these bailiffs of the flies. There is something about the insect too, which seems to rivet their attention. Heaven knows what it is, but let any one look about him, and he will acknowledge the existence of the fact. Perhaps the sympathy may proceed from a desperate feeling such as makes a ruined man in the east tear his own clothes, or a Spaniard in a passion beat himself on the

face—for surely the movements of those odious insects, have nothing of amenity in them.

And yet it can hardly be from that frantic humour either, for the spider plays the infernal god to others, but balances its own person fairly. The creature takes extreme care of itself, and sacrifices with caution. There is no genuine recklessness in its pouncings—its revels are not joyous but devilish in the extreme, it sucks blood, and yet the forlorn in a christian state like to look upon it. Quiet reader, is there a moral here?

Miss Violet came to him, seated herself by his side, and threw her gown lightly over the pretty mysteries of her crossed legs. "And you leave us to-morrow, Mr. Osborne?"

Walter answered in the affirmative.

"You go by the Telegraph?"

There was no denying this, as it really was the coach's name.

"Well, I travelled by it last winter," resumed

Miss Violet, it was a bitter frost, and no inside seat. I shall never forget that night."

"It must have been very unpleasant," remarked Walter.

"Indeed it was," answered the young lady, with emphasis.

"You found it very cold, I dare say."

"My knees were like snow-balls, Mr. Osborne, and although I could not of course have permitted any body to rub them but mamma, and she was not with me, and would have been too stiff if she had—yet there is no denying that friction would have very much relieved me. They brought me some hot brandy and water, but it was British," added Miss Violet winking her left eye, "and I could not touch it."

Walter bowed and plucked off a small bit of twig from an ever-green that clambered round the bower-seat.

"And you go to-morrow?" resumed Miss Violet.

"I do Miss Violet."

"And to Scotland I hear."

Walter confirmed that too.

"Happy Scotland!" whispered Violet in a self-communicative sigh, but quite audible.

"I am not much in a condition to confer happiness on any country," remarked Walter with a smile, "if I go to it on my own business."

"But the heart, Mr. Osborne, the heart! There is no doubt a heart there, that like the watchdog's honest bark, will be brighter when you come."

"That may be, but none I fear on my account. But don't you think you may get cold here, without your bonnet?"

"I suffer from coldness, it is true;" said the other, "but it is not the coldness that a bonnet can prevent."

There was no mistaking this, but Walter, who had long ere now found out that the lady took a kind of leap-year license with her father's assistants, would have fain changed the subject, but ere he could do this———

"To-morrowat this hour," resumed Violet, "how sad this place will be!"

"I really think a shawl now, or something of that sort, as your neck, and—and—is so very much exposed."

"I am very fond of the twilight," said Miss Death as if waving aside all other considerations, "there is a sweet melancholy in this hour which sensibly affects me. I am like Pa in that respect. Look, Mr. Osborne, how beautifully the moon shines on that bank; I love the twilight hour—the only drawback is the cockchafers."

"It is indeed very beautiful, Miss Violet, still I think if you had a shawl."

"Pray do not speak of shawls at an hour like this," said Violet. "There is poetry in our family?"

"So I understand," said Walter.

"To morrow at this hour, you will be far away!" resumed Miss Violet.

"Not so very far," said Walter.

"Far enough to forget us," rejoined the other.

Walter thought that might be very true, if he had not to come back again.

"What a sweet hour this would be," said Violet smiling faintly, "what a very sweet hour for an interchange of feeling."

"Yes it would," answered the other, who began to dislike the turn things were taking.

"I really do think that no woman with any soul," resumed the young lady, "could refuse to listen 'to love's young dream' in a night like this. If I were placed in such a situation, I am afraid that the poetry within me would speak, even if I myself should be disposed to be silent. Now there is Miss Dorothy Crisp, whom you may have seen at our house. Our natures are *so* different. Dorothy says, that she would not marry an usher for the world, and I always say, that I don't mind what a man is, if he wins my heart. Oh, it is the heart always

with me! But Dorothy is all for the military, that is her hobby—is the military."

"It is rather a common one, is it not?"

"I don't know that. I only know that it was never mine. And Dorothy says, the idea of *you* marrying an usher dear! you, an only child with such expectations, you that have refused so many excellent offers; you surely would never let yourself down in that way. Then I always get angry, and say it is not anything of the sort, to marry such a person if I loved him, and that I would marry him even if he could only take the junior form. A little cottage I say, Lucinda, with the man I love, rent about twenty pounds, unfurnished, and the delightful moments of happiness we should pass, with one servant, to whom I would not give a farthing more than nine pounds a year, they ask ten in Pebblesford, but ten is too much—don't you think so?"

"Upon my word I really have no idea," said Walter.

"Of course it would not be your place to interfere in these matters,—but I am quite decided about the nine pounds."

"It does not seem a large sum," said Walter, not knowing exactly what to say.

"It is quite enough," said Miss Violet, winking her left eye, "quite enough."

Walter again had recourse to the sprig of holly—for his mind, occupied with its own thoughts, was in himself gradually becoming inattentive to his companion's remarks.

"I am afraid, Mr. Osborne, you must think me a strange girl, but I have such an active imagination, I run on so, my bosom is bare in a moment."

"Why it *is* rather bare," said Walter, who had imperfectly attended to the observation, "that is the reason, why I advised you to put on a shawl."

"Pray do not speak in that way, Mr. Osborne," said Violet warmly, "absence will be bitter enough without that. I shall have no kindred

spirit when you are gone. Mamma is well enough, but then she is not like you !"

"No, I certainly do not detect any likeness," said Walter, keeping up his attention with difficulty, and wishing sincerely that Miss Violet would go into the house, and let him have a quiet quarter of an hour with his meerschaum.

"No no, there is none. I have always found your society interesting Mr. Osborne, and it is natural that I should be unhappy at the thought of losing it. I am a strange girl, I know I am, but the poetical feeling, Mr. Osborne, which I inherit may perhaps make me different from others. I am a strange, wayward girl, liable to flights of fancy, low spirits, and what Pa calls a sentimental organization. I am told that in this respect, I resemble Mrs. Hannah More."

"Please Miss, supper is ready," called a servant from the top of the walk.

Walter rose and Miss Violet took his arm. "You will sometimes think," she whispered,

as they walked slowly along the path, "of the confiding friendship of a heart you have left in Spare-Bone House."

Walter promised that he would; Miss Violet pressed his arm, and so they went in to supper.

CHAPTER XVI.

How Walter Osborne travelled to Skerryton, and whom he encountered on the road.

After a peddling sail of five days and six nights along the imperial coast of Britain, Walter Osborne, as he lay wretchedly in his narrow crib, was informed by the tobacco-chewing, horny-handed captain of the industrious vessel, that they were off the thriving Scottish seaport of Saveall, and in half an hour would be in the harbour. Walter got up from his feverish rest, and ascended to the deck. The sun was shining warmly, making

the pitch liquid, and the hatches hot. The heavy green sea distressed by the flickering sunbeams, had a grim, mercantile look; the thickly pent town, with its harbour-side sign-boards, had a sad reality about it; warehouses, manufactories, with long brick chimneys polluting the azure, white-washed marine residences, and one or two windmills, invited them to approach; and the country round was bare, and without a tree which was visible to the naked eye. A dirty beach with black boats hauled on it, and sheds in which ship carpenters were hammering at the white skeletons of future vessels — long masts with faded paint on them, black tarred timber and floating logs, strewed the shore; the whole scene had the popular word "business" written on it, and had only amenity to those who might come thither to buy or sell.

Walter was there on no such errand, and desperate as was the alternative, he almost wished that the vessel would put to sea again.

But this was out of the question, as Saveall was their port of destination. A pilot boat boarded them, and a spitting old man took the helm. Walter smoked a bad cigar, and endeavoured to take things philosophically—but it would not do; his body and mind were ill at ease, and he saw himself sailed into the harbour with feelings like those of a man dragged to execution.

The shipmaster recommended to him a tavern near the pier, and to this place he went. He obtained a room to himself, a meagerly furnished depressing little place, containing a bed, and an atmosphere impregnated with the odour of tar from the ships before the door. Here he spent what remained of the day, in the wretched society of his own thoughts, dining scantily on part of some blackened broiled meat, and taking bad tea with pewter spoons. Violent invincible mariners made a hideous noise below, a smartly dressed, impu-

dent looking citizen-of-the-world-like young lady waited upon him, and treated him as if she were in the habit of being frequently deceived by his sex. Ship owners with red faces and blue coats, retired shipmasters fond of cold rum and water, and of telling stories about the Canary Islands, pilots in canvass trowsers, shipping clerks in straps and whiskers, and little old women selling unripe gooseberries, passed all day long before his window, and at twilight stood about in groups—the harbour with its boats floating sleepily, and vessels in a state of relaxation along its piers, the black shining water busy with its tides, and the arid aspect of warehouses on the other side; these were the only objects which Walter's eyes could feed upon.

Nor were his ears more agreeably ministered to, in this nautical retreat. The clanking of crane-chains, the dolorous efforts of strength of sailors at windlasses, and a drunken pilot, who had an offensive habit of singing "the

Bay of Biscay O !" which people smiled at as they *passed*, but which was no smiling matter to those who lived in the house opposite his favourite station; these and the occasional violent ringing of a bell in his room—which in ordinary times was in the occupation of the barmaid, and now, when any body was not promptly attended to in the tap-room, they invariably set this bell in clamour; a nuisance which Walter only eventually got rid of, by wrenching it from the wall—served farther to make him sick of existence; at least of living there.

Next day having got his portmanteau placed in a waggon, which in three or four days would "put up," at "The Romantic Thistle," in Skerryton, Walter set out for that town, a distance of a hundred and seven miles—on foot. The waggon went a round-about way to it, and had no accommodation for passengers; so Walter had nothing for it, but to walk.

A hundred and seven miles!—and miles in

Scotland are exacting matters; it was a desperate undertaking even for one pair of boots. But there was no remedy, and he started as he thought, cheerfully.

And a man may start very cheerfully on such a journey on foot, but the difficulty is, to continue cheerful as he proceeds. Walter found this now, for twenty miles walking under a summer sun, made him willingly accept the shelter of a small hedge inn, kept by a "widow woman," whose husband had been killed in an adjoining quarry.

He stretched his aching limbs on the widow's decently prepared bed. His dreams indeed that night, made his wakening very sad—but it was no time to be influenced by sadness, and after breakfasting in the sanded parlour, attended by one or two lightly stepping poultry, that seemed to make restless claims on him, for the loss of their pilfered eggs, Walter bade the decent woman good bye paid his bill, and received her blessing.

Again the sun was flushed and violent, and the turnpike road was hard and dry. But now belts of planting, and the coolness of river-valleys chequered the tedium of his progress; villages with wise men in smithies, fruit gardens, and cottages with ivy covered porches—taverns with great men's arms swinging over their doors—grey walled castles, and modernized religious houses, with their scattered oaks and rich dale-like parks—places which had escaped the virtuous fury of that "talented minister," John Knox—gave amenity to the scenes. The blue hill tops of the north, were rising before him—he was approaching the country of the Celts, where a man, if not of antiquity of parentage, had better be still-born, than venture into life.

Yet the improving beauty of the scenery did not improve Walter's boots; on the contrary they began to crack, and the mile-stones to meet him slowly. It was no common pedestrian our, his eye looked coldly on the prospects,

for the long grey turnpike took a great part of their effective beauty away.

Still Walter pursued his melancholy course, walking the greater part of the day, but at night enjoying rest, the poor man's blessing.

On the third day the weather changed. It rained continuously; the roads became spungy, and the wind shook the woods. Carriages closely covered drove rapidly past the weather-beaten foot passenger, the great coated footman behind them, looking at him contemptuously from under their umbrellas; gentlemen on horseback gallopped along the road; the farmer on his sharply trotting cob looked over his shoulder at him, as if he thought his condition was an unfortunate, if not almost a suspicious one,—but on they all passed, and he continued walking on the wet turf still.

Now this was the worst of his outward sufferings, for it displayed his poverty to all. When the day was fine, nobody could tell that he did not walk from choice, but now, when it rained

without ceasing, he was denied the benefit of that doubt. Had every body else been walking, he would not have minded it so much, but it was a painful thing to have carriages passing him, with aristocratic contempt for his condition in the sound of their very wheels, and mounted boors in great coats trotting hardly by, and looking back to commiserate him.

Next day however was all sunshine again. His clothes were dried, he started early, and was cheered by the thought, that he was not much more than twenty miles from his journey's end.

As he walked along the road, he overtook a cart, on which the word Skerryton was painted in white letters. It caught his eye, and he inquired of the person who drove the cart—an elderly, hard-featured man—if he was going thither.

"Wo—o—o!" said the party addressed, checking the horse with the rope reins, and

looking at Walter for a moment or two without speaking.

"Are you going to Skerryton?" demanded Walter again.

"And ye'll be ga'en there, I mak nae doubt," said the other.

"I am," said Walter.

"And would like a lift? Wo—oo

"I would willingly pay you for it."

"It's twa and twenty mile frae this," remarked the other.

"So I saw by the last milestone. But are you going there?"

"Ye'll be ane o' the play'cters I surmeese."

"No, I am no actor I assure you."

"May be ye're in the medical line?"

"No, nor that either."

"Ye're sure ye're no an awgent for life pills or ony pestilence like that?"

"No I am not—but why don't you give me a direct answer?"

"A direct answer. I hae halted my beast,

and that is what monny would na do to a stranger."

"That is very well, but no answer to my question. I ask you what you will charge to take me to Skerryton, if you are going there?"

"Charge, ye ask me what I will charge."

"Yes I do."

"Aweel."

"Pray man tell me if you are disposed to take me or not."

"Disposed to tak ye."

"Yes," said Walter, beginning to lose his temper, "you have answered none of my questions yet, and have put half a dozen to me."

"Ye're ower headstrong I see to drive the mere, or I might mak an easier bargain wi' ye—but as ye are sae froward tempered, I maun e'en charge ye half-a-crown."

"Very well," said Walter mounting.

The other still held the horse. "May be it

is for a freak that you walk, and are rich after a'."

"You have nothing to do with that, you know."

"No, but it's a lang road—twa and twenty mile—five shillings now, does na seem out o' the way."

"I will only give you what you asked first," said Walter angrily.

"It's a sma sum for a lang road, but if I ken't your real circumstances."

"And what the devil have you got to do with my circumstances?" demanded Walter, getting more and more out of temper, "drive on at once, or I shall get out and walk."

"Gee wup!" cried the other, setting the horse a going. "We had a fine shoor yesterday," he observed.

"We had a great deal of rain," said Walter.

"And ye've been walking in't nae doubt?"

"Yes I was," said the other coldly.

"Ye'll find it pleesanter to ride. It's a pro-

vidence ye met wi' me, although it *does* cost half-a-crown."

Walter said nothing.

"I hae been to Peatborough," resumed the other, "wi' a load o' bonny fir spars, and bundles o' cleanly cut boughs for branching peas. I got them at Mrs. Arden's cottage, when I trimmed the grunds in the spring."

"Arden! What Arden is that?"

"A douce discreet leddy. I'll say that for her, although she *is* English—but then she canna help that—a braw leddy there, wi' a power o' walth—it's a pity she wastes it on pagans, black-a-mores frae Barberry and sic like gentry. There is twa o' them yonder. If they had ventured here in the auld times, we should hae put them to death—and reason guid. But noo-a-days we suffer them to gang at large. Fine times! we shall hae teegers running about amang us ere lang."

"Arden," repeated Walter, becoming inter-

ested, "is she any relation to Sir Edmund Arden?"

"His uncle's widdy they tell me. Sir Edmund Arden!—and do ye ken Sir Edmund Arden?"

"I do," said Walter quickly. "Is he down there now?"

"That he is, and that pernicious Muncheer wi' him—the deil munch him, as he will some day. What wi' Turks and Frenchmen, we are like to hae a ceevaleezed neighbourhood. I pray heaven they may be a' keepit in life, for if the deil should demand his rights while they are here, I should like to ken, where would they get a christian to bury them, for I'm sure it would na be me."

"Then Sir Edmund Arden is still there?"

"Still there. I'll gear bides lang. He is living now at Granite Ha', and they say is thick wi' Leddy Julia, that Erastian English woman. A bonny time he has o' it there. And this Mrs. Arden and the lassie Brandon, are driving and

dining there day after day. They say she is to be married to Sir Edmund when decency will permit. I wish her joy o' her bargain. Gee wup you jawd!"

"Do they say that?" inquired Walter quickly.

"Ay do they. She has a bonny estate someway in the south, and wastry enough God kens, if she had the Bank o' Scotland. She thinks nae mair o' scatterin' choice seeds on gravel-walks, than if they were chaff."

"And Sir Edmund is, is ——"

"Sir Edmund is the fawvourite there—as graceless men will ever be wi' women. He is a braw chiel, and as 'cute as if he had been born amang the savage Hielandmen. This has ay been an afflicted country. Yonder where ye see the blue mountains rise, in auld times was filled with rampagin' freebooters, as it is noo wi' Philistines that speak Gaelic and are only fit for makin' roads. Worthless whiskey drinking Amorites, accursed o' God and man,

children o' Beelzebub, the terror o' peaceable people when they are drunk, and the affliction o' a quiet country when they are sober. Ne'er-do-weels—reprobates."

"Why, they are your own countrymen."

"It has pleased Heaven to chasten us wi' sic neighbours, and it may be we hae deserved the calamity by our sins. My ain countrymen! they are the countrymen o' satan, and he is most heartily welcome to them. My ain countrymen! when did ye ever hear that I was the countryman o' sic gentry? Praise be blessed! I was na born within the Hieland line. The pagan Turks we hae got amang us may be their countrymen, and they are weel sorted—but never ca' the Hielanders the countrymen o' christian men."

"I do not understand this prejudice of yours; but you said just now that Sir Edmund Arden."

"I say naething against Sir Edmund Arden."

"But you seemed to say, a moment ago, that

he was as bad as those Highlanders, whom you seem to detest so much."

"Ye are maybe a friend o' Sir Edmund's."

"No, I am no friend of his, I assure you."

"He is a braw chiel," observed the other. "They say the women o' Skerryton are tearing their caps about him."

"And Miss Brandon!—does she frequently visit this place—this what do you call it Hall?"

"Granite—there is a power o' granite there."

"This Granite Hall. She goes often there?"

"That she does. The lassie is young and bonny, and would be a braw bride to ony man, setting aside her braid lan's. I wish her joy o' her woer--to me he *is* like the Hielands—they look bonniest at a distance. Gee wup ye jawd! This is the minister's mere. The auld rudds has ower mickle corn, and ower little wark, like himsel—though I say it, that should nay say it. Hech sirs! it's a braw life to be a minister! And heeven and earth! have na I

seen ye before? was na ye down at Skerryton some three or four months syne?"

"Yes I was," said Walter.

"And hae I been sae far left to mysel, as to tak ye a' this distance for half-a-crown?"

"If you had been left to anybody else, I should have walked rather than have paid more."

"And Priam wrote me that ye had a power o' walth—but it's like he was but braggin. Priam Guthrie my nevoy—ye were a guid frien' to him, it wad appear, in pagan lan's. Dear dear! and this is you! Gee wup! ye jawd—this randy o' a mere kens a' the public houses, as weel as her maester, worthy man."

"You are Priam Guthrie's uncle then."

"It's no a thing to brag o', but I hae that misfortune. Flesh is but grass, and Priam—the devil mend him—is sib to me. He is my ain sister's son. He a' but brak his mither's heart but it had been broken twa or three times, as every woman's has."

"In what way?"

"In this way," answered Mr. Simeon Delvin, for the reader will have already discovered it was he; "First, her heart was broken by a trumpeter in the militia, then by a vagrant man that stood on his head on a stage in calico drawers—then by Priam's father before marriage, then after marriage; and then by his death. It was broken after that by the death o' her best cow, a bonny Teeswater as ever was milkit; then by the death o' my mither, Heeven be mindfu' o' her saul! then by a soger that made love to her, and beguiled her out o' fifty shillings, then by Priam, listin' amang idolaters in a pagan lan'—and would hae been brakin' and brakin' until now, if she had nae died o' the asthma."

"Then Priam can hardly be said to have broken her heart after all," said Walter.

"It was weel broken before—but he did his best to keep it broken. Hech sirs! but women's hearts are tough things! they bear

brakin' weel. My ain wife—she was a canty body and a savin', said that I broke *her* heart, and I was sair troubled wi' the thought, till Doctor Porteous tell't me it was an affection o' the liver that was the cause o' her death. Gee wup ye jawd !"

Some time after this conversation, they came to a small village, in which Simeon, having with considerable difficulty beaten the minister's mare from the stable entrance of the principal inn, drew up at a small public house on the outskirts of the village, and having consigned the animal to the care of the landlord, a dark burly man, with corderoy breeches, having the knee buttons open, ordered half a feed of corn for the mare.

"Half a feed!" said the landlord. "Your mere has mair need o' a peck."

"Na, na," said Simeon coolly alighting, "it's a borrowed beast."

"Oh that accounts for 't," said the slovenly

boniface, leading the mare into his small stable yard.

Mr. Delvin saw the mare fed; insisting on heaped measure, and taking the landlord into the house with him as a precaution; then ordered a plain dinner, of which Walter consented to partake.

Simeon kept the landlord in conversation—giving him obscure hints about treating him to whiskey – until he was quite satisfied that the minister's mare had consumed all her corn; and then hastily dismissed him from his presence, by pretending to take offence at his opinions regarding the great church question of non-intrusion.

Walter and the grave-digger dined together, and in half an hour set out again on their journey. The minister's mare whisked her tail and was evidently hungry; Walter saw that she was so, and at his own expence treated her to a feed of corn at the next inn, an extravagance, regarding which Mr. Delvin uselessly expostulated, as-

suring him that a spare diet for one day would do the animal good, the quantity which she daily consumed at home being very prejudicial to her health.

Twilight with the blue misty shadows of summer was stealing on the quiet fields as they drew near to Skerryton. The cool breezes from the sea reached them, and by and by, they got a glimpse of the German ocean lying cold and still, beneath the waning light of the dim grey sky. The sea-birds flew over head in flapping coveys, the rooks journeyed in toilsome loneliness to the dark pine woods—the farm-dog bayed in the distance, and the rivers gave forth their gushing sounds.

The minister's mare knowing the road, and rendered cheerful by Walter's feed of corn, whisked her plump haunches into an uneasy trot. Mr. Delvin accommodated himself to the motion, and sung the old hundred in a voice that suffered much from the unevenness of the road.

"And now," resumed Simeon, "is na this a bonny spot?"

"Yes it is," said Walter, who however had no eye at that moment even for the beauties of nature.

"When ye were here last," continued the grave-digger, "it was winter time, but now every thing is fair and charmin'. This would be a fine place for sick folk to come to—I mean, in hopeless diseases."

"I dare say it would," said Walter.

"The air is kindly and balmy, medicine is cheap, and if ta'en in large quantities might be bought at the wholesale price."

"Where is this cottage?" demanded Walter.

"There on the side o' that hill."

"It is a very pretty place."

"Oh aye—"

"A very sweet spot upon my word. And Katherine lives there!"

"Pagans live there," said Simeon cynically "heathens live there, and drink the strong and

eat the fat, when Christian people in their immediate neighbourhood, are forced to be content wi water frose."

"Does Miss Brandon often walk out?" demanded Walter.

"Oh aye," answered the old man fixing his keen eyes on the other. "About seven in the evening when the weather is fine, she commonly tak's a walk to Woodside—there, about a quarter o' a mile frae the cottage."

They now passed near the house. Walter's heart beat tumultuously for he could see the white dress of Katherine Brandon moving in the garden.

"There is the bonny lassie," said Simeon, as he struck the minister's mare a smart blow, "there she is, walking there. It's a fine time for her, now that the weeds are awa. This last shoor will hae freshened the flowers. And there is Skerryton before us—and there is the kirkyard, a place that ony gentleman need na blush to be buried in; a fine open halesome place, and

a bonny situation, commanding a view o' the harbour and the bay."

"It is a very dreary spot," said Walter.

"Dreary spot! that's what ye a' say. May be ye would like a band to play there o' evenings, or a show o' flowers to mak it lively. Dreary spot! and what would ye hae? May be trees now, wi lang roots—fire works now and then, and the diel kens what. Show me a doucer spot in braid Scotland. A bonny kirkyard, no a grave there but is seven feet deep."

"It is a most melancholy looking spot."

"We hae nae reels or quadreels there it is true," said the other, "that is a place for the dead, and I surmeese their dancing days are done. A dreary spot! What in Heeven's name would ye hae a kirkyard to be? May be a public house at the door, but the dead canna drink, and if they could, have na wherewithall to pay for't. A dreary spot! I wonder what the gentry would hae. The grass

is pruned, the door is lockit, and the walls are high."

"Well, well," said Walter impatiently, "here we are now getting near Skerryton, there is half-a-crown for you. I shall get out here."

"Where do you put up? At 'The Romantic Thistle?'"

"Yes I believe that is the inn's name."

"Aweel, I wris' ye weel sir—ye were kind to Priam, though there never was kindness mair thrown awa', and while you are here, if I can serve you, send for Simeon Delvin, and ye shall na have to send twice. I wish your honour good health."

The grave-digger touched his hat, and turned towards the manse, and Walter took his way to the inn.

CHAPTER XVII.

The meeting and parting of Katherine Brandon, and Walter Osborne.

WALTER found his portmanteau duly waiting for him at the "Romantic Thistle," and was provided with the same bedroom which he had occupied on a previous occasion. It might have created painful reflections, had he been less fatigued than he was; yet in spite of all the vicissitudes of fortune he slept soundly.

But the morning came, that callous questioner of averted reflection—the morning, that

rigid note of interrogation which stands in bedrooms, and asks if this is not a blessed life—the morning, that joyous hour for singing birds, but often sad time for thinking men; the morning came, and Walter, without hope or aim, and what was worse than either, almost without money too, awoke to understand fully how wretched he was.

They got breakfast for him, and one or two pretty cherry-lipped waiting women bustled about in attendance—creatures all gladness and smiles, as if they were only accustomed to wait on the fortunate of the earth; young and blooming in the active happiness of a well frequented inn; with tight bodices, smart sayings, and cheerful ways. Walter, now well dressed, received their marked attention, he could even hear them now and then disputing at the door, as to which should attend him, and his poverty was evidently unknown at the Romantic Thistle,—but all these extraordinary

attentions only served to make him think of his light purse more anxiously than before.

He did not go out during the early part of the day, but sat in his own room, attempting to read; but without success. His window commanded an open view of the stable-yard, with poultry and long-backed grooms walking about in it, enlivened now and then by a carriage arriving, or a rough coated harnessed horse, being dragged reluctantly from the stable, to be flogged into trotting along the turnpike road. One or two dogs of a fighting breed, also walked about with a quiet intelligent jockey mien—and a large tame sea bird hopped slowly from place to place, evidently not happy, but comparatively resigned.

Walter also endeavoured to be so, but for all that waited anxiously for the evening. The landlord who remembered him, came to his room, inquired for Mr. Burton, and hoped he was well. He alarmed Walter by speaking

too of certain delicacies of the season, which he proposed to procure for him. Walter begged that he would not do so, as his wish was to live plainly.

And so the long hours passed away. The strong clock in the open lobby struck them duly, the dogs heard them as they slept in sunshine at the whitened door, old blue-faced tipplers sauntered about the place, and now and then some one alighted from a gig, and entered the house—and thus it was, all day.

The sun was inclining with rich splendour towards the west, the air was gently stirred as the sleep of infancy, the broad blue sea lay calm, and without a wrinkle, except where the evening beams trembled on it in liquid gold, the dark mountains stood softly against the horizon, the woods were silent, and the wide plains slept.

Walter had gone to the place which the grave-digger told him of. It was a secluded narrow road, in the valley between two long

thickly wooded hill. A small trouting stream ran through the place, and joined the larger river a short distance beyond. where it spread into what appeared like a placid lake. The sweet odour of greenwood and the wild flowers of the hills was here, the gushing sounds of the brook rose coolly in the woodland silence, and the bat fluttered restlessly from bank to bank.

Rising above the wooded steep on one side was the last portion of the ruins of a rude fortalice of oblivious antiquity; the stunted masses covered thickly with ivy, and seeming as part of the rock on which they had been raised. The birds built their nests there now, and found security from the mossy perpendicular of the cliff, that rose up from the shadowy water's current—a security which it had given to the warrior's harrassed home, it may be, a thousand years ago. The long grass grew, where the hall fire had burned, and the hare fed securely, where armed men had trod.

The mountain wind blew where soft eyes had slept, and the raven had its solitude where rude revelry had been. There had been treasures of gold hoarded, where the badger had its nest, and priests had stood by death-beds, where the wood pigeon dwelt. The clangour of steel had sounded, where a hermit might have lived, and wild minstrelsy had risen in triumph, or poured forth dirges of wail, where no sound but the tempest rose higher than the dull noise of the rocky stream.

The long sun-beams glanced on the edges of the ruin as brightly as if it was not of the past; the trees spread their branches round it, and the broken declivity to the valley's base was covered with brushwood and fern.

The narrow grey road had a stealthy course, as if it broke unbidden on nature's solitude, and its sides had a rich greenness, which showed that many did not walk on them.

And the seclusion of the spot was now undisturbed by a footstep. Walter's heart

beat anxiously, for now was the purpose of his journey to be realized. It was most ill-defined indeed, as to its ulterior object; he only wished to meet Katherine once again, for although he knew that no interview with her might change his destiny now, still to meet her once again, would be grateful to his memory—she was all that life had left to him to love, and the absence of amenity in every other object to which the thoughts of the future could turn, made him regard this with an intensity and absorbing unity of feeling which the desolateness of the heart alone can give.

There is no love like that of the world forsaken—it has no cross-lights to disturb its flame; it glows in the bleak darkness around it, a pure and holy light—it is fed by the elements of life itself, and when extinguished thoroughly, the heart, in spite of all that has been scoffed at regarding it, will in very truth soon cease to beat. The widow will live who has lost her only child, and the old man of

wealth will, after sudden beggary, linger out many days, but the nature which passionate and ardent has really interwoven *one* happiness with all its hopes, and can forget the loss of every other element of that good fortune, which, in the wisdom of the world, constitutes the distinction of conditions — the nature, which unlike the cautious selfishness of that of the greater portion of mankind, can surrender *all* its treasures of heart, without retaining a private purse, has risked life on the venture, and will lose it if it fails.

Philosophy has its sterile apothegms, and wise men in all ages have said coldly, "do not trust," but some natures *will* trust, and they are the noblest natures too. Even prudence at times finds her poised beam turned down, with the full-measured reward of that confidence which she had termed foolishness; though her records will not chronicle them— her quick eye has aptness for its failure, but

hands over to occult chance, the reason of its success.

Yet this is an error on which proverbs flourish, and the narrow code of life takes its glory and its name. The child, in the very maxims it spells through, is secretly whispered to try to over-reach, until the faith which Heaven's word teaches begins to appear a most foolish thing—the natural aspirations on which doubt sits uneasily become weakened, and the cramped mind exults in crushing feelings, the issue of such triumph, the weedy churchyard mocks again! Wisdom has come upon us through perverted sources, however pure they may have seemed in the classic's eyes—the structure of life has bulwarks for the received doctrines of the soul's struggling to independence through polluted lights, and we receive it, because it is true to the hour service of the present—and never think of the waste it leaves beyond.

But it is not *truth*—for truth has no ex-

ceptions. Let us look around us—even to our own hearts, and see if a cold void does not arise under all the industrious maxims for the accomplished pagan's "happy life;" nay, nay, we are no gods, the bursting of a weakened artery will send us shivering from all our wisdom, and let wise men then pour proverbs on our ears, mark the result, and record it if they will.

They mistake the nature of man, who tell him not to trust. What is he that he should not do so? Is he an isolated deity, as the atheist would make him out, in common with the beast which the butcher slays, and the insect which he crushes with his heel? Then, if not that, the sickly glory of his independence dies; and without trust, he is resolved into the elements by which the grass is nourished, and the pasture flower blooms. He sits consuming, writing out his own case, and calling on the worms to engross it in their calendar; or if his destiny has been in the eyes of the world a dazzling one, it is but fame,

beating her wings over earth resolving to nature's laws.

The philosophy of life is a poor jest, a worthless heraldry of heathen wit, in spite of all the pretty proverbs which acute intelligence takes into stock, and the experience of a fragment of a century, converts into a code which does for our day. We have a tide of wisdom running among us, but it is not a truthful one; it has too many by-streams not to convince us of that. The grave man of millions shuts up his heart, toiling for more, and then scatters them to harlots who laugh at him for what he pays—but *he* had sailed down this assured stream, with trimmed sails, and had laughed at those who had been content to pause at banks, which the paltry roses that grew there, had induced them to land upon—but roses in his eyes, to be worth anything, should have stems of steel, and leaves which might be torn away, and coined into a metallic currency. But ask him "what to buy?" — more roses with

steel stems, and leaves which men at the mint would place in their arithmetical scales?— even so; but the end, without the roses of life, is worthlessness still!

Why should the respecter of the heart's feelings, be taxed with short-sighted wisdom? It is the longest sighted of all—for it extends beyond fortune amassed, and fame struggled for. It is the prize we all seek, and the only prize worth seeking in this world of ours. It cannot be bought, for the seeds of sweet flowers will not take root in gold. We should laugh at the husbandman who would wait till autumn, ere he would acknowledge the spring time, but we never laugh at the philosophers of life, till we see them reaping the artificial harvest, which the maxims we acknowledge, induced them to reckon on as the best. "Go to!" say the sages of modern days "the bible of our life is the price of stocks, and faith with us, is but a power of attorney."

But these reflections are carrying us from

the spot where Walter Osborne was, and Walter's own thoughts were even removing himself from it. The place and hour brought to his memory pictures of old times; of those evenings when by tacitly concerted accident, he used to meet Katherine Brandon, and converse with her for hours, as they had walked their horses side by side, over the road side turf. He remembered her mild voice, with its sweet and truthful tones, her gentle ways, so free from coquetry; and how he had blushed for himself, as he had ridden home, at having unconsciously told her the causes of his secret heart-burnings, as well as spoken, now and then, to betray other feelings, which those very heart-burnings made him anxious for fitter days to avow. And it may be, she too had blushed, at the thought of having listened to them—yet she met him still.

The minutes stole slowly by, but Katherine came not—a whole hour passed, and the solitude was unbroken. Walter got into that

nervous state which anxious watchfulness produces. and started at every sound. Still he was there alone. The long sun-rays began to glance athwart the tree tops, and the noise of the brook rose louder than before; and the scene which an hour ago he had thought beautiful, appeared cold and heartless now. "No no," muttered Walter to himself, as he began to turn homeward—"fate has denied me, even such a solace as this."

At a turn of the road he saw a light figure also returning. His heart beat thickly—it was Katherine; yes his own Katherine! She had shortened her walk that evening, little knowing who had watched for her so long.

She heard footsteps, and turned round, then stood as if rooted to the earth. Walter was by her side, and took her hand in his. For a moment or two, neither could speak.

"Katherine!" said Walter, gazing on her with an earnestness which agitated her more.

"Walter!" whispered Katherine, but so faintly, that the words died upon her lips.

"This is at last happiness!" exclaimed Walter fervently, hardly knowing what he uttered, "would to heaven it could last, or that I might die when it is gone!"

Katherine was still too much agitated, to notice what he said. Flushes rose, and fell like pulses on her cheek, her bosom moved restlessly, and her soft eyes had an expression which showed that she had no power for the moment to control them in the secrets they might tell.

"I have often looked forward to our meeting again, Katherine, as the happiest moment of my life, and now!" continued Walter, in a tone of deep feeling, "what is it now!"

Katherine had just power to withdraw her hand.

"Nay bear with me for a while," said Walter with emotion, "we may never meet again. Fate has put its seal on the gulf which sepa-

rates us—let not the few moments I may pass with you now, render my wretchedness greater than it is."

Katherine turned her beautiful eyes to his.

"I may not disguise it Katherine, I loved you well! Indeed I gave you all, all my heart! I must tell you that, if I would save it from bursting now, though my condition renders me no fit person to tell you such a tale."

Katherine's countenance began to change, her eyes partially regained their composure of expression, and her aspect its natural reserve. Walter observed the change, and he felt it painfully.

"Oh do not look so, Katherine!" he burst out, with an emotion which he could not control, "if you but know how happy one kind look, one kind word from you would make me; how I should hoard it in my heart as the last record of this vain dream of mine—and a dream it has been, and nothing more! My

presence shall not offend you, for our destinies are far apart. I ask no love, you might tax me with baseness, if in my condition now, I should ask for that!"

Katherine looked distressed.

"No," resumed Walter passionately, "the mist has been taken from my eyes, the world has presented changed aspects to us both since we used to meet (Katherine blushed deeply) in such evenings as these. New objects, and how different they will be! must now engage our thoughts; but still, still Katherine," continued Walter with new emotion, "I would fain know that you thought kindly of me."

"And why should I do otherwise, Mr. Osborne?" said Katherine, in her calm, soft voice. "I have known you long, and shall ever think of you as one whom I early learned to esteem. Whatever may be the nature of that condition which you hint at, rest assured it cannot deprive you of that in my eyes."

But the tone seemed cold in which she

uttered this. Walter felt it to be so, and it almost unmanned him. He, who as she walked beside him, felt dizzy with the thought—he, to whom the moment was like a vision, of which even in its presence, he almost doubted the reality—he, who if death had been in their path, would have sprung forward to meet it for her, to be spoken to in measured terms. "I have been a fool!" he thought, "a fool all my life. She never loved me, never!"

"I have to thank you," said Katherine, speaking with difficulty, "for the journey which you were some months ago induced to make on my account. Although a very unnecessary one, I—I ——"

"I know it was," said Walter, whose pride was stung, "and my title to interfere was a bad one."

Katherine made no reply.

"Yes," thought Walter bitterly, "it was indeed a bad one. I, a poor outcast, and he a most accomplished member of that com-

munity from which I must now be content to be excluded." But no! his heart shamed away such reflections, it was Katherine who was by his side, and a harsh thought of her sat uneasily on his mind. He could have thrown himself at her feet, and would have blessed the death which had come to him there—he loved thoroughly, and with all his heart! He was a proud man, and yet in the language of the east, he could have kissed her garment's hem—she was all that the world had worthy to be desired—there she was, by his side; the pure, the good, the noble, the dazzling prize of life!—the heart fed hope of his existence, his all in all, his own Katherine!—a gentle tone might have made him forget his condition, and reckless of all, offer up his heart homage to her even there, but her words were cold—they were very cold!

Katherine remembered the letters which she had read—She knew nothing of his real condition, indeed the grave-digger had told her

that it was a fortunate one—her pride was hurt at his words, and although in spite of all, her heart yearned towards him, Sir Edmund's lessons forced themselves upon her mind, and, alarmed at her own feelings, she called in the innate pride of her nature to crush them.

They were now within sight of the cottage, and Walter saw them approaching it, as the doomed man looks on the dial-hand passing to the hour at which he is to die! Neither spoke, until they came opposite the very gate.

"Farewell," said Walter, taking the hand which now she did not withdraw—"farewell, Katherine, may you enjoy all the happiness you deserve, and this world can give you no greater. God bless you, Katherine!—he could say no more, for a convulsive action of his throat choked the words he strove to utter. *Her* countenance was pale as marble, and her little gloved hand rested coldly in his clasp—he took the hand in both his own, pressed it to his lips

again and again, then suffered it in anguish to fall from his touch.

Katherine went into the cottage, sought her own room, and throwing herself into a seat, sobbed aloud. "Walter! Walter!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands together, "for whom have you deserted me?"

"She never loved me!" muttered Walter as he hastened from the spot. "I have been a madman to cherish the hope I have done. Now the bitterness of my lot is complete —even *she* despises me on account of my poverty! But no, no, no! my own Katherine! my good, my glorious, my blessed one!" He sank by the wayside; nature claimed her own; he covered his face with his hands—and wept;

They were burning tears, the tears of the strong man's heart, but they were shed freely now.

And the next evening Katherine came there again. She came there evening after evening, and the quiet valley was as beautiful as ever,

and the thrush sang its even song in the wood, and the clear brook murmured in the solitude—she came there evening after evening, and truant tears fell at times on the places where she sat —but Walter never came again.

END OF VOL. II.





THE GRAVE DIGGER



THE GRAVE DIGGER:

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SCOTTISH HEIRESS."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
T. C. NEWBY, 65, MORTIMER ST. CAVENDISH SQ.

1844.

THE GRAVE-DIGGER.

CHAPTER I.

How Walter Osborne arrived at Sparebone House, and the circumstances under which he left t.

WALTER remained but one other day in Skerryton, and then, with a heavy heart, set out again on his lonely journey. And it was a sad journey for a heavy heart, dreary and painful in its progress, and leading to a destination on which hope itself refused to look. Sparebone House, or the thought of being a teacher there, was by no means an idea of an exhi-

larating kind, nor in any way calculated to make one indifferent to fatigue, privation, and the endless troubles which a person in Walter's circumstances must endure. Bad as they had been before, they were much less irksome on his first journey, than they now were on his return.

It was indeed a most wretched pilgrimage, and many a time Walter longed to sink down by the wayside and die. Many an evening, when Katherine was watching with a trembling heart for the sound of his footsteps, he was wandering by the lonely roadside, pursuing his cheerless way over hill and dale, which, with all their gentle prospects, had none that was soothing to him. He would pause indeed and gaze upon them, and think they were very fair; he would turn his melancholy eyes to the country seat sheltered in the quiet beauty of its clustering woods; and his mind would learn a knowledge it had never felt before—he would look to the farmer's home-

stead, and the cottage where the husbandman dwelt, and wish that he too had a home; and then he would look on the naked village church on the hill, and feel gentle peace steal upon his heart, and influences quicken aspirations, which all but in their semblance, he had forgotten long ago. The journey was long and toilsome, but it made Walter Osborne a wiser and a better man.

Still it did not improve the state of his boots, and they were his last, decent pair. Bodily pain also fretted itself to a state which could not be regarded lightly, the milestones gave him heavy warnings of the small speed with which he was progressing—those heavy warnings which fatigue must bear, when it is not made a pleasure; and Walter's was not of that nature by any means.

Carriages as before passed him, containing quiet eyed young ladies, and matrons in silken attire, with countenances expressive of a household bunch of keys—and elderly gentle-

men greedy of health. Slowly moving phaetons escaping from park gates—now and then a young girl, on horseback, followed by a trotting groom—even in the carts which he overtook, the drivers lay at rest—all the world seemed contented, and at ease, but he.

Do any of us ever think as we drive past a foot passenger on a weary road, what his condition may be? We see him raise his patient eyes to us, we see fatigue written on his countenance, and judge of his condition in life, by the dress he wears, then turn round to look on some new point on the scenery. Yet it may be we have passed a study of a better kind. That man has all the feelings we inherit—hopes, fears, dear memories, and tender ties—perhaps it is an artizan toiling onward to a place where he but hopes to be enabled to toil, and receive the scanty wages, which his heart yearns to bestow on the poor wife and helpless ones, who in thought are anxiously

following him in his lonely progress; to us, he is a passing object of roadside indifference, but what is he to them!—perhaps it is an old man journeying; do we think as we see him resting on his staff as he has toiled up the weary hill, what his feelings are, or that his nature is the same as ours—perhaps it is the peasant going home with his spade on his shoulder, and his child that had come to meet him, trotting at his knees; do we believe that we are happier, or that God has blessed us more, than he has done that humble man?

Truth indeed cries aloud, but who will listen, though the night of death is coming on us all —years pass, and hope's wings grow weary, but still truth is esteemed but a thing to be set upon a seal, and not in its wider visions, to influence the concerns of life.

All this is true, but is nothing to our tale. Walter arrived at last at Saveall, and found his portmanteau at the maritime tavern, in

which he had formerly been, and to which, knowing no other place, he had directed it. The vessel he had arrived in was again—as the shipmaster had previously informed him she would be—on the point of sailing to the small English town, from which "The Telegraph," carried goods and passengers to London, by way of Pebblesford.

Walter embarked again. It was a tedious voyage this time, for the vessel for the most part was becalmed, and when the wind blew it was generally on their front teeth. Still the patient ship, by the industry of watchful navigation, managed in a day or two to enliven the English shores, quietly taking advantage of the thoughtless wind, whenever it caught it unawares. By these means, after ten days of comparatively torpid floating, Walter duly arrived at the port of landing, and the "Telegraph" received him and carried him again to Sparebone House, on the day immediately before that, on which Mr. Death's classes were advertised to reassemble.

Mr. Buckhurst and Monsieur Pompadour arrived the same day, both in good health, and tolerable spirits considering what was before them. Mr. Death had been taking his annual summer tour to Margate with his family; and Miss Violet and her mamma had a great deal to speak about what they had seen there; Miss Violet indeed had more than that, for she had fallen in love there with a young man, of whom she knew nothing beyond that he wore an imperial; a circumstance which as it would form no guide to the post-office, prevented her from having the consolation of corresponding with him, even under an assumed name. Mr. Death had been much mortified by the London publishers refusing to have anything to do with his epic poem of Jane Shore, and was now employed on another literary work of more modest pretensions, which one of the publishers had given him a hint of, as a thing likely to answer; it being a set of school tables of weights and measures, which to meet the taste

of the day, he was to have illustrated; and the multiplication table, which required very little literary preparation was already in the artist's hands.

The autumn came, that season which makes the wretched more unhappy than they were. The yellow leaves fell, and whirled in the damp, cold winds—the roads became earth coloured and muddy, and the green fields looked sodden and chill. The mornings had no melody, and the twilights were but the cold warnings of approaching night. Gladness had vanished from nature's face, and waned on the hearts of those that looked upon it.

Day after day seemed to add to the misery of Walter's condition. What hope had he to cheer—what memory to solace him? He had none, and the prospect of a winter there, in the dull routine of irksome duties, depressed his mind to a degree which began to create that listless apathy, which is worse than despair.

Even Mr. Buckhurst, a person not much in

the habit of being influenced by the changes of seasons, beyond the natural effect of heat and cold on the human body, and wet and dry weather on the state of the roads, lost his spirits and became dejected; Monsieur Pompadour bore things better, as he found a vent for his feelings in playing the flute.

One evening as the three assistants sat round the fire in the school-room, from which the boys had just been dismissed, Mr. Buckhurst suddenly grasped the poker, and thrusting it violently between the bars of the grate, declared his conviction that the life they were leading, was one which no human being could long endure.

"I am afraid we must endure it," said Walter coldly.

"Most undoubtedly," said the Frenchman, an expression which he pronounced very well, and was much in the habit of using.

"I don't know that," resumed Horatio, holding the poker in a meditative, but formidable

manner. "The world has surely something better for men of education than this—not that I set much store on mine, but still—"

"It seems to have nothing better for us," observed Walter.

"A letter for you, Mr. Osborne," said a servant entering the school-room with one in her hand.

It was from Mr. Burton, acquainting Walter that he had the prospect of procuring him a situation of a somewhat better kind than his present, and recommending both him, Mr. Buckhurst, and even Monsieur Pompadour, not to engage themselves at the approaching Christmas vacation, until he had seen them.

Walter read the letter aloud.

"There was no need of his recommending me not to re-engage myself," said Horatio. "I wonder what this is he has in view for us. I hope, if I am to be employed, it will be out of doors."

Walter did not appear to be much elated by the obscure hope which Mr. Burton held out, for he felt that external circumstances in the narrow extent of compass which they could now change to him, were not likely to affect his happiness much for the better or the worse. And whatever were the thoughts of M. Pompadour, he kept them to himself.

Time passes slowly to the unfortunate, but as surely as to the happy. Weeks ran on, and the morning of the day before Christmas came.

Mr. Death had paid his assistants their salaries in the drawing-room.

"My dear friends," said Onesepherus, as he had put a piece of blotting paper on the last signature, "we are going to part, and although you have all declined to renew your engagements in the bosom of my family, yet you may rest assured I shall ever think of you with profound regret, and be happy to

hear of your future welfare. You, Moeshu, are a gentleman whom I esteem on account of your copious knowledge of that interesting element of an enlightened education—the French tongue; to say nothing of your talent on the flute, although that itself would entitle you to the friendship of any man. You, reverend sir (addressing Mr. Buckhurst, who was leaning back on the sofa, listening to Mr. Death with some curiosity), will always stand high in my regard. The progress in Julius Cæsar, which some of your pupils have made, is highly creditable both to you and them, and will I have no doubt be a source of lasting happiness to yourself through all the trials and vicissitudes of life. And you, Mr. Osborne, whom I beg you will believe I only mention last, because you are the youngest of the three, I must ever respect, and distinguish on the tablets of my memory, as I may say, in large text. You have conducted yourself,

sir, since you became my mathematical assistant in a way that Mr. Euclid, the author of that popular work on Trigonometry, would I am sure be delighted to hear—if the worthy gentleman is still alive, which I almost fear is not the case—with a reserve and propriety, sir, of a most remarkable kind. And now, my dear friends, I have made up here three packets of my circulars, which I trust you will distribute among your admiring friends, and if I can in return be of service to you by way of reference at any time, or if you might demand any little premium on procuring me a pupil, I—I—forgive me, my dear friends, if I feel affected—I am a man of feeling, and—"

Here the coach arrived, and Mr. Buckhurst started up.

The checked horses struck the wet pavement—it was a cold, rainy day. The travellers' luggage was placed on the roof, Mrs. Death,

Miss Violet, and all the servants came to the door to see them depart. Mr. Death requested them not to forget the circulars—the liberated assistants shook hands with the family, mounted the coach, and in another moment they were gone.

CHAPTER II.

How Walter Osborne is instructed in some of the mysteries of life by an old acquaintance in an old scene.

The coach rolled heavily along the splashing road, the wind blew in the travellers' faces, and their journey to London was cheerless. Walter thought once or twice of the probability of being arrested there, but that, and indeed almost any other calamity of life, had not in perspective, any very active terror for him now. He sat out the cold journey silently.

On arriving in London, he took a cab and went to the Lord Burleigh, where he was accommodated with the room which had been vacant since he left it. Mr. Buckhurst and M. Pompadour had other quarters to which they went, it being arranged that they should all meet Mr. Burton at the Lord Burleigh in the evening.

After an hour or two passed in the solitude of the ancient room, Walter heard a voice on the stairs which seemed familiar to him, and the next moment Mr. Pontius Burton presented himself.

"How do you do, Mr. Osborne?" said that worthy gentleman shaking Walter by both hands. "We have not met now for eight or nine months. Looking thin, but then I hear you have been to Scotland—or perhaps Sparebone House does not 'make fat th' ribs.' Well, but how are you?"

"Tolerably well. I am very glad to see you, Mr. Burton. *You* seem rather—"

"Why, to tell the truth, I am in better condition than my clothes; and though I look poorly I am by no means in bad health."

"I am glad to hear it, and how are all our acquaintances down stairs."

"Two of them you took with you, and the rest are as they were. And now I must tell you what I dare say you are more desirous of knowing, than the state of health of the whole metropolis, I mean this situation which I have hopes of getting for you."

"Ay, what sort of thing is it?"

"Why to you it will I dare say seem a very extraordinary sort of thing; but to me it is quite a regular, every day matter. You have dined—don't you drink now?"

"Oh, yes, I do sometimes," said Walter.

"Well, then just pull the bell. It rains cats and dogs, and we have now to speak about what is called business; two excellent reasons for having some trinkets in the way of crystal, just to set off the table."

"Well let us have a bottle of port," said Walter, ringing the bell.

"No," said Pontius, "no, no, my dear sir, be wise for it is time, high time for you to be so."

"It is almost too late," said Walter sadly.

"It is never too late to be wise, till a man makes a will in favour of a public charity—let us have brandy and water. Here is Antony. Bring us two tumblers of hot brandy and water, Antony, and carry Mr. Osborne's compliments to your mistress with his request that she will be so obliging as to mix them herself.

"And now Buckhurst wrote me that you were getting in a very desponding state, at that same academy," resumed Pontius.

"And so I think was he," said Walter.

"Ay, but the crack of a whip, or a bottle and a song can make him as happy as ever he was—but you are not a man of that stamp.

You distress yourself on account of your altered circumstances."

"They are enough to distress any one," said Walter, "but I do think I bear them philosophically enough."

"It is a poor philosophy which keeps ourselves miserable, under the cloak of a calm guise. It is like the paltry vanity of those who starve themselves to keep a fine mansion round them. No, no, whether you bear your misfortunes philosophically or not, your eyes alone tell me that you suffer from them."

"We cannot render ourselves insensible to suffering," said Walter.

"No, but we need not make our senses in regard to that endowment, more exquisite than they naturally are. There is no greater misfortune in this world than a large capacity for suffering. Had I been gifted with it, I should have been dead long ago. Yet you see I rub on still. Here comes the brandy and water. Your good health, and better times to every

body but the bailiffs, and may they turn their attention to agriculture. Ah, this is genuine cognac!" said Pontius putting down his glass.

"Well, what is this situation you spoke of?"

"Assistant editor to a newspaper."

"I know nothing of newspapers," said Walter.

"Neither did I at first, neither indeed does anybody till he becomes employed by them. The whole press is filled by disappointed men. Nobody educates himself in this country for the profession of author; or the few that may do so, are unworthy of the name. That mighty body the press, that fourth estate, is composed of gentlemen entirely without estates, personal or real, unless indeed their wits may be called a personal estate, and they too are generally in pawn—disappointed barristers—men of education, who have lost the means of supporting the rank in which they were born—men of talent, who have no steadiness for anything else. In

fact, a man, as has been said, must serve a time to every trade but ours: we are all ready made, although something of the Devil's coinage—for it only requires a man to be fit for nothing else, to be one of us. It is a strange life ours," continued Mr. Burton, getting into one of his reflective moods, "we wear away the best energies of our minds in ministering, day after day, to the paltry concerns of the hour—weaken the elements of life by the constrained action of the subtlest parts of our nature—live in a state of miserable excitement, and die with 'poor fellow!' for an epitaph. Our indiscretions are no wonder, for it is generally indiscretion which has brought us to such employment—we feel every day that our course of life is one on which prudence shuts her eyes—but then we are fitted for no other, and the wants of the hour must be supplied."

"There are surely some prudent men on the press, as you term it," said Walter.

"There are all sorts of men on the press," said Pontius, "although prudence there is somewhat out of joint. But as Doctor Johnson said, 'let us not discourage one another.' I wish these people would come. I promised to call with you all on Mr. Swift, at six o'clock."

"Who is Mr. Swift?"

"Have you lived in London, and have never heard of Mr. Felix Swift? He is one of the great spirits of the age—one of those extraordinary men who speculate without means, establish banks and railways, and when they are in the Fleet prison, occupy their minds not about how they are to get out, but how they are to cut the Isthmus of Suez. These are the men who have set all our majestic enterprises in motion; the directors, whose names appear in their prospectuses, had barely permitted them to be there—but the scheme at which everybody shrugged their shoulders at first, by the bustling energy of those extraordinary men, to the surprise of the world, takes root

and flourishes; men of capital find themselves entangled in it, share brokers speculate on it, and then people speak about the enterprise of this great country."

"And what comes of the originator?"

"Directly the thing succeeds it loses all charms for him, and in a month or two he is seen walking quickly about the streets in a thread bare coat, pestering capitalists out of their lives to allow their names to be put to another scheme—that gained, he is seen here and there and everywhere, with his pockets full of prospectuses, and borrowing money from every body, to enable him to pay for advertisements."

"And is this gentleman a person of that sort?"

"He is, but in another way. Mr. Swift has been a great originator of newspapers, indeed nearly all the new journals are the fruits of his genius. His instincts lead him to the press."

"Is he then proprietor of these journals?"

"Not he. He only creates them to sell. When a paper of his has, by almost superhuman exertions been kept going for a month or two, it is always understood to be in the market, and with the proceeds of the sale, he commences another. His trade is one of the most uncertain in London; sometimes he realizes good sums, and at others, he loses the whole, and his personal liberty at the same time."

"These seem very useful members of society," said Walter.

"They are indeed, and a class too that the world knows nothing about—I really wish these people would come, it must be nearly six now."

"Shall we be detained long there?"

"No, I do not think so; Mr. Swift is very rapid in all his conclusions. He has engaged me to superintend a new journal he is on the point of bringing out, and I have recommended you to him as assistant editor. I have hopes for Buckhurst too, getting employed in some

capacity or other. Monseiur Pompadour's case is rather more uncertain. But why do you ask me if we shall be detained long there ?"

" Because," said Walter hesitating, " you remember Lucy Wrey—the young girl we saw at the newspaper exchange ?"

" I do," said Mr. Burton, suddenly changing countenance.

" I have now a few pounds," said Walter, " and the prospect of earning more. I fear both she and her mother are in great poverty, and I have been thinking during the afternoon how I may assist them without hurting Lucy's feelings, which I know are sensitive. If it be not too late when we leave this Mr. Swift's, I shall call on them this very night."

" I have concealed something from you," said the other, speaking with a degree of embarrassment for which Walter could not account. " I met this girl some three weeks ago returning from that same miserable place. She seemed faint and ill. It was a cold evening,

and the rain was falling fast. I ventured to accost her, and made the best excuse I could for calling a cab, telling her I was going her way. Poor girl! she was evidently suffering, and sat there by my side wet and cold. She She made many enquiries about you, which however as I knew you did not care that your circumstances should be made known to your friends,I could not satisfy. Nay do not look so unhappy, I—I have since heard that she has been very ill."

"Oh why was I poor! why was I poor!" cried Walter passionately.

"Nay, do not distress yourself on that account, I—I am not rich, but I have managed to, to send from time to time some small matters in a way not likely to offend, as they do not know who sent them; and they were to a mother for her child."

"Burton," cried Walter with the tears starting to his eyes, "You are a most worthy fellow!"

"Do you think so? Well then, let us have a little more brandy and water."

"No, no, I cannot drink more. You see my glass is only half finished—but have you some, by all means."

Pontius rang the bell and Antony ministered to him again. He had just concluded this second tumbler, when Mr. Buckhurst, evidently in high spirits, with his hat on one side—wearing a new drab pea-jacket, flourishing an old riding switch which he had found in his trunk, and singing, "Gee wo Neddy," entered the room, accompanied by Monsieur Pompadour.

CHAPTER III.

In which the reader is taken behind the curtain in more ways than one.

Mr. Pontius Burton conducted his friends to a street leading off the Strand, and to a small shop, situate and being in that street. It had originally—or more correctly, formerly, for it was of doubtful origin—been in the personal occupation of a stout, Hebrew lady, who sold cigars, and was now being converted into a place that already looked like a newspaper office.

"A dirty, impudent looking boy was in attendance, who having called Mr. Swift, that gentleman himself made his appearance, with a steel pen in his mouth.

Mr. Swift was an active looking man, with a countenance of a racy expression, what the French might call *spirituelle*, and the English knowing. He received his visiters with business-like politeness; with some difficulty accommodated them with seats behind a green curtain that ran on an iron rod at one part of the counter, and warned them all to take care of the paint.

"And which of these gentlemen did you say was Mr.—Mr. Oswald?"

"Osborne," said Pontius.

"Mr. Osborne—you, sir," addressing the Frenchman.

"No, sare," said Monseiur Pompadour, "*viola.*"

Mr. Swift bowed, and Walter bowed.

"Our preparations are proceeding you see

Mr. Burton," continued Mr. Swift. "We shall have the first number of the paper out the first week in January. To-morrow I shall begin to advertise."

"Oh very well," said Pontius feeling about him if all the paint was dry.

"I have got a capital name for it," said Mr. Swift. "I am to feel my way a little this time with the religious classes. The name will create a sensation. It is to be called 'The Holy Poker, a weekly journal for church and state, the drama, literature and the fine arts.' Capital name, isn't it?"

"An excellent title," said Mr. Burton, evidently much pleased with it.

"Yes, striking, Mr. Burton, very striking—what do you think of it, sir?" addressing Mr. Buckhurst.

"A man is sometimes knocked down with a poker," said Horatio, "but I don't see anything else striking about it."

"Oh it is a capital name," resumed Mr.

Swift—" you will find it will soon be pirated. Yes," continued he, scratching his right whisker musingly, " they will have out, ere long, an ' Illustrated Holy Poker,' an 'Illuminated Holy Poker,' and heaven knows what —we are sure to have the title encroached upon. But then we shall be the real, genuine, original Holy Poker."

" It is a very excellent title," said Mr. Burton again.

" It is a title," said Mr. Swift, crossing his hands, stretching out his legs, and crossing them too, " which will command the serious attention of the public. The Puseyites will wish to buy the paper—the high Church party will wish to buy it—the Wesleyans will be mad after it, and the Catholics will I am sure make an offer for it. Then the Jews—a fine body the Jews, and they have no paper as yet—they may wish to buy it, and you know we could easily alter the name, and call it ' The Moses' Rod, with which is incorporated ' The Holy Poker.' "

"A very good idea." said Mr. Burton, "but," added he thoughtfully, "I don't exactly know how I should be able to please the Jews."

"Oh plenty of Rabbis, plenty of Rabbis, long bearded fellows, who would give the world to be allowed to write, and you could touch up their crabbed stories a little. The thing will answer, sir, the thing will answer."

"And what side in politics shall we take this time?" enquired Pontius.

"Oh that is a bagatelle," said Mr. Swift. "I've never thought of that—try them both, sir, try them both. The same expence, the same type—it is all my eye that, you know."

"We must decide upon something though," said Pontius.

"Time enough to think about that. We shall first then, if you like it, try the ultra-tories and the high church."

"With all my heart," said Pontius.

"We shall give them three weeks, and if we don't get a bite in that time, we shall try

the radicals, and the voluntaries—and in fact, in so on, in so on."

"I understand," said Pontius.

"And now," resumed Mr. Swift, "time is money, and the value of both depends upon how often they are turned over. Let us decide at once about our friends here. You, Mr. Osbaldiston—"

"Osborne," said Walter.

"You Mr. Osborne, in reliance on my friend Mr. Burton's extensive judgment, I shall be happy to retain as assistant editor, at two guineas a week salary—to increase as the paper rises, as it is sure to do."

"Upon my word I don't know how I shall be able to write about all those things though," said Walter.

Mr. Swift's countenance fell.

"My friend is by far too modest," interposed Mr. Burton, "I shall be answerable for him."

"Very well, very well," said Mr. Swift,

" time is money, as I had the satisfaction of saying before. Now this other gentleman, Mr—"

" Mr. Buckhurst," said Pontius, " a Bachelor of Arts."

" A bachelor of arts—well I *may* one of these days have need of a bachelor of arts; but what I want now, is a person of a decidedly religious feeling—a thin man, a person you know with a black coat, a spare face and a white neckcloth—a fellow that can talk about predestination, and canvass the religious classes."

Mr. Buckhurst looked infinitely disgusted at the idea of such employment.

" He may do though for the advertisements," continued Mr. Swift. " At a word then, I engage the gentleman on your recommendation, at a salary of thirty shillings a week."

" But what am I to do?" demanded Horatio.

" Never mind that," whispered Mr. Burton. " Now, Mr. Swift, can't you find employment

for my other friend here?" pointing to Monsieur Pompadour.

"We shall want a publisher."

"Oh I could pooblish," said the party alluded to.

"You are a foreigner—the devil take it!" exclaimed Mr. Swift.

"Yes, sare, I have the honour to be a gentleman of France, *decoré*."

A Frenchman in the office of the 'The Holy Poker!'" exclaimed Mr. Swift, falling back in his chair aghast, "no, no, that would never do."

"By Gar!" exclaimed Monseiur Pompadour getting into a passion, "this is a pernicious homboog, this sacre, what you call, poker!"

"The gentleman won't do," said Mr. Swift decisively, "time is money—send him home to his friends."

It required the united exertions and persuasions of Walter, Mr. Burton, and Horatio to appease M. Pompadour, who was foaming at the

lips with rage. They partially succeeded, but he still sat moving his thumb and forefinger convulsively on his upper lip, as if he had been twisting a moustache.

"Next week we shall begin work," resumed Mr. Swift, "and you, sir, (addressing Walter), must prepare something sharp, something bilious—you understand—for starting with. We shall begin with the High Church—Now my talented friend there is apt—I must say that—he *is* apt when he has drank rather too much brandy and water, to make his articles a leetle too ee-vangelical. They are good, mind you, they are good," continued Mr. Swift raising his middle finger by way of emphasis, "but there are times for all things, and we must feel our way a little, before we put on all our steam."

"I am really afraid," said Walter, "that—"

"My friend is over modest," interposed Mr. Burton again. "We shall have all snug. And we begin then, next week?"

"Next week—the only thing we want now is a publisher."

"I think," observed Walter, "that I know a person who might do for that, since my friend here does not seem to suit you. A Scotsman, called Guthrie."

"Scotsman! the very thing for a religious newspaper—send him here—I will speak to him. Now," added Mr. Swift rising, and taking the steel pen from behind his ear, "good bye—time is money—take care of the paint."

CHAPTER IV.

A death-bed on Christmas Eve.

THE wind rose higher as night set in, and the rain fell without ceasing. Sounds of riot, in spite of all, mingled with the clamour of London streets: the song came loudly from the tavern window, the hideous sight of female profligacy exulting in its defying orgies, was that night at every corner; and the poor slave, the wretched bondsman of scantily paid toil, was

staggering about the pavement, with the rain pouring upon him, and his garments of labour saturated to his body, shouting poor wretch, because he was, what in his miserable judgment, he called happy, on Christmas Eve! The ballad singer had his verses which he chaunted on the mud, and the groups that stood near him gave laughs, which they thought were merry ones, to the dirty wit which he sung there in the rain; cabs splashed by, with well dressed people in them, going to evening parties, smiling on those scenes, because they thought them a healthy remnant of good old English times; policemen in oil cloth capes stood at tavern doors, and smiled benignantly at the drunken riot within; for why, in spite of the letters and numbers on their coat collars they were Englishmen themselves; the fruit-seller had her paper lantern illuminated over her cooling wares, and by seeming to enjoy the hubbub around her, strove to soften men's hearts to the purchase of oranges; the street

bands played, desperately, the popular airs, the wind instruments giving forth their energetic melody in a way which all who had ears must hear, then shaking the damp from their trumpets and beginning again; the pawnbroker's shop was busy, and groups were around its door; half clad phantoms came abroad that night, creatures never seen in the sunlight, barefooted, and with their hands on their naked bosoms, they moved stealthily along; and one or two "fast men" of the wealthy classes, drove through the small streets, blowing bugles, splashing passengers, overturning fruit stalls, and doing all the other mischief which accident might include.

Still the rain poured, and the wind was high. The squares were dark and deserted, with their bare trees waving in the gloom, the long patrician streets were quiet, except when a carriage drove through them, or a band disturbed their foggy silence. The mansions of the rich were lighted, and chariots stood at their doors, the

tumult of the distant streets was unheard there, and only spoken of as a pleasant thing, by those who had driven through them.

But there was one house in an humble quarter in which these sounds were heard. In a meagre room, a widowed mother sat by the death-bed of her only child, and the din without came there unceasingly. A candle burned neglected on a small table, for the mother's eyes were watching her daughter's feverish sleep.

Lucy was dying. Nature had sunk at last; her thin cheek was flushed, and her long, dark eyelashes trembled as she slept, her slight, bare arm lay over the covering, and her meagre hand was in her mother's clasp. The bosom in which so many sad thoughts had dwelt, was moving restlessly with struggling life, but the forehead was as calm and fair as ever, and the mild countenance preserved its gentle beauty, in spite of pain—looking more heaven-like as it lay there, with penury around it, and the

clamour of riot near, than if it had been reposing amid objects of more kindred ministerings. The fire was waning, and the faded walls were cold, the very dress the dying girl wore was patched and worthless, but still that mild countenance slept, with an unrebuking suffering, touching and sad.

At length Lucy awoke. "Is it morning?" she enquired hastily.

"No, no," said her weeping mother, "it has but struck eleven."

"Bring me my work," said Lucy, "I am better now—I can work till twelve. This is Christmas eve, is it not?"

"It is," sobbed her mother.

"It was an evening, dear papa—" but here even Lucy sobbed—quickly rallying however she said earnestly, "Give me my work, mamma, I can work till twelve. I—I am better now."

"Nay, Lucy love."

"I am better, indeed I am—bring the candle nearer. I can work till twelve—do

not weep so; I shall be happier when I am working. You have no money, dear mamma! oh let me work!"

"Lucy!" cried her mother, clasping her hands in agony, "do not speak so to me!"

"Bring the candle nearer, and the little table to my bedside. I can sit up and finish my work, and you will read the bible to me. You have no money! I must work—indeed, indeed I must. I shall be happier when I am working. And I am better," added Lucy, raising herself. "I am much better."

"Lucy, Lucy," said her mother, "do not speak so, or you will break my heart!"

Lucy's head, in spite of her efforts, drooped on the pillow again, but she still said, though in a feebler voice—

"Bring me my work, mamma, I can work till twelve—I am faint, but I—I can work!"

Her mother sank on the bed, covered her face, and tried to conceal her sobs.

"You will not let me work," said Lucy, in

her mild voice, "yet if you knew how happy it would make me! oh it is a shame to me to be here, and know that perhaps to-morrow you will be—"

Here her mother's sobs burst out aloud, and Lucy, meek and patient to the last, was still.

"Forgive me, Lucy!" cried her mother, sinking on her knees beside the bed, and clasping her hands while the tears ran over them. "Forgive me that ever I made you work for me—I have been often harsh and peevish to you—Lucy will you forgive me! Oh, Lucy will you forgive your mother!"

Lucy smiled through her tears—but it was not the smile of forgiveness—it was too mild, too full of love for that. Her mother sprang from her posture, clasped her dying child in her arms, and wept as if her heart would burst.

But nature, stern nature would have its own. Lucy's head sank on the pillow again, her eyelids fell, and her labouring bosom stirred the

covering that pressed on it. And Lucy slept again.

An hour passed and midnight came. The city clocks struck the hour, but the sound fell faintly on the clamour of the streets—the waits now rang out their cheering tunes—the tavern reluctantly shut its doors, and their wretched revellers poured forth, to stagger to their wretched homes.

The cries became more solitary, and at last died away. Silence came upon all, and the clocks struck the hour of one. Night at length brooded over the motley scene—night, dark, cold night. There was neither moon nor star in the sky—the wind burst fitfully, and the rain poured still.

Lucy awoke again. "Mamma," said she faintly, "come near me."

"I am by your side, my child," said her mother drying her tears.

"Who will you have when I am gone?" continued Lucy, in the same faint voice., "You will be alone, with no

one to help you, no one! My mother—my poor mother—what will become of you! Oh, mamma, this is a bitter death!"

"Speak not of death, dearest child," sobbed her mother, kneeling down again beside the bed.

"You will have no one! no friend—no one to help or comfort you! Oh, why am I taken from you, my poor mother!" She laid her feeble arm round her parent's neck. "God will surely succour you," she added, "I have prayed, oh how earnestly have I prayed for that! Kiss me, mamma. My mother! my mother! my mother!"

Her eyelids fell again and her breathing was now in gasps. Once more she rallied, and though her whole body seemed convulsed with restless agony, her dark grey eyes looked mild and patient still.

"Is it morning?" she enquired in a feebler voice.

At that moment the clock struck two.

"This is Christmas morning," murmured the dying girl. "It had used to be a happy time!

"Lucy, Lucy!" sobbed her mother. "You are going where sorrow never is."

"How dark, how dark it is! Mamma, give me your hand—"

Her eyes changed their expression, and the muscles of her face became convulsed. A shriek arose in the silence of the night, and the widowed mother fell prostrate over the dead body of her child!

CHAPTER V.

How life and death jostle strangely.

The weather changed at sunrise, and the Christmas morning was sunny and fair. The early rays glittered on the sodden ground, the damp mists curled from the earth, and the caves of azure were deep and blue. The fleecy cloud remained stationary in the heavens, the broad Thames glided seaward under the dazzling sun, the spires were gilded by the

the morning rays, and flashed them back again over the city's dun. The sharp prowed wherry shot onwards with the tide, and the river steamboat pattered snorting on its way, its narrow deck covered with passengers, and its band sending music over the small, broken waves—the morning coach guard blew his cheering horn as the cool team pranced through the quiet, empty streets, the red-eyed reveller passed stealthily to his rest, and the tavern doors opened to admit him again.

It was Christmas morning in London, and the church bells began to chime—the ranged shops had their long shutters closed, and the milkman that morning gave his whoops undisturbed. The waits went home with their horns beneath their arms, and the night coach tottered from its damp, cold stand—the postman struck at quiet doors, and the sweepers at the crossings were busy with their brooms.

Day opened upon all; on the debtor in his cell, on the rich man in his mansion, on the old

who thought of their youth, and on the young to whom it was a holiday, on good and bad, on rich and poor, on young and old, to all,—to all it was Christmas day.

The morning was not far spent when Walter Osborne arrived at the widow's house. The narrow door was opened to him by a stranger, a woman he had never seen before. He enquired for Mrs. Wrey—the woman answered. "She is very ill."

"And Lucy," demanded Walter hurriedly, "Lucy—Miss Wrey—how, how is she?"

"She is dead!" answered the other in a mournful whisper. "She died last night."

Walter neither spoke nor moved.

"Will you please walk in, sir?" demanded the woman.

But he whom she addressed could not answer.

"Every thing is tidy," said the woman. "God help me! this is a sad employment for me. I have a child unwell, and my time can ill be spared."

Walter entered the place. The light came dimly into it from above the closed shutters, and through the crevices; but still he could see the slight wares, the silent records of poor Lucy's toil. Approaching the little parlour, his heart seemed suddenly to check its pulses—and he stood as if rooted to the spot.

Here, on the humble couch prepared for it, lay the mute body of this sweet and gentle girl. The modest bonnet she had worn, the slight shoes in which she had walked many a weary mile, the unfinished work on the small, round table, and the chair on which she used to sit uncomplaining, during long long hours of patient industry, they were all there, but Lucy's toils and sufferings, her timid hopes and anxious fears, were over now.

The mother was sitting beside the couch, nearly as motionless as the body that lay on it. She saw Walter enter, and new tears came silently to her eyes, but they turned again

towards her dead child, for *he* was the stranger still!

Walter took the widow's passive hand in his, their eyes met again, and he became unmanned.

There was a sharp knock at the outer door. The woman who had opened it to Walter, went to it now, and came back with a letter which she said a footman had given to her.

It was addressed to Lucy, and laid idly and unopened on the table; for the eyes for which it was intended were closed in the sleep of death.

The letter was from Katherine Brandon. It was a long one, telling Lucy many things, and enclosing a bank note of a hundred pounds. Katherine had sent the letter to Lady Felton with a request that she would forward it—her ladyship had received it some three weeks ago, but had laid it aside, and forgot it till that morning.

And had it but arrived before, how many

anxious and bitter thoughts might it have saved the gentle bosom, that now lay unstirring there!

Walter, stunned and heartsick took leave of Mrs. Wrey, put his purse into the hands of the attendant, bidding her use it for what was required, and telling her that he would take upon himself the arrangements of the funeral.

When he called on the following day he found Mrs. Wrey more composed. She insisted on returning his small store of money which he had surrendered, acquainting him of Katherine Brandon's gift (and this, although he did not think of it then, saved Walter from much embarrassment, for he had given up every shilling he possessed in the world), and begged him, with sobs, that he would make the arrangements for the funeral. This Walter again promised, and did.

The day of the funeral came. Walter, Mr. Burton, and the undertaker, a little man, who took snuff in large quantities, and had

his head and conversation filled with the com-laws, occupied the mourning coach that followed the hearse.

They arrived at the church-yard—the coffin was carried into the cold, naked church. The hearse driver and one of the mutes had some pleasant conversation with the grave-diggers—little boys standing about the place, observed to each other that the funeral was not such a fine one as they had seen yesterday, the horses of which had plumes of feathers—and a feeble old man walking in the church-yard for exercise, leaned on his staff, and looked into the open grave. Besides these, two men, one a very active looking person, and the other rather bloated, were patiently standing at the church-yard gate.

The body was carried out, and Lucy was laid in the grave. The curate, a thin faced man, with black whiskers, and something of an attorney-like expression of countenance—wearing a black velvet cap to keep away cold in his head, took his place in a sort of sentry

box, and read over the conclusion of the service there. Dust fell on dust, the frosty featured divine shut his book—the undertaker bowed, and seemed anxious to get away—the grave-diggers took off their coats and shovelled the brown earth industriously, and Walter, with a desponding heart, accompanied by Mr. Burton, walked to the church-yard gate.

Just as he reached it, one of the two men, already mentioned, took the liberty of advancing, and touching him on the shoulder, Walter turned round, and had the satisfaction of being informed that he was arrested on the suit of Nathaniel Flint, gunmaker to her Royal Highness the Princess Sophia, for a debt, with present costs, amounting to thirty-nine pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence.

A crowd began to collect; Mr. Burton, although taken by surprise, had his wits about him sooner than his companion—he called a cab, which by a kind of instinct, had been waiting for the event, disencumbered Walter

of the trappings of mourning (which the undertaker promptly took possession of), hurried him into the cab, and enquired the bailiff's address, then proceeded with the undertaker to the mourning coach.

Meantime the active looking man also entered the cab, the bloated faced gentleman took his seat on the dickey, and in half an hour Walter, heart-sick and dizzy, found himself in the cold room of a spunging house, with a strongly nailed window looking into Chancery Lane.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Walter Osborne's sojourn with Mr. Trap.

The afternoon passes slowly in a spunging house to a person who sits there alone. The early shadows of the long wintry night began to deepen the natural gloom of Chancery Lane—it was one of those brown frosty London days, when the sun shoots flame-coloured beams through the hazy, dun mists, and the light on house walls has a dry, sombre hue;

one of those dim, calm days in which ancient buildings rejoice, and the mansions in quiet streets have an additional look of respectability.

There is no place in London which has a more depressing look to a man in difficulties than Chancery Lane. The cold, silent buildings, those theatres of anatomy in which all that life gives us, or the heart may hold dear, is put under the sharp, callous knife—the nests of chambers in which instruments for the mind's rack are being forged night and day—the densely peopled courts, with pavements worn to smoothness by the footsteps of the anxious and forlorn—the freezing stillness of a region in which the possessions of so many victims are being juggled away—the venerable communities, the very names of which give one the idea of mirth with a vulture sound—and the shops, with tradesmen in them, as quiet toned as if they were whispering in a court, with their sign boards 'all about the

law,' as those of hedge inns are emblazoned with the arms of the great man, under the shadow of whose glory they stand.

It is a very depressing place this Chancery Lane to anybody. The pale barrister emerging from his den, after having perhaps sat up half the night weakening the action of life in labouring for the bubble reputation—although to him it is not exactly a bubble, but something heavier, yet for all that not worthy of its price—the dapper attorney, with long papers in his pocket, hurrying on smartly over the well known way—and the strapped phantom of a clerk, diving under archways, nodding to bailiffs, or strutting with an effort to preserve the starveling appearance of a gentleman, with his red, bony fingers encased in broken cotton gloves.

Such were the objects by which Walter was enlivened from his window, where he himself was casually remarked by people at the win-

dows opposite, as a new guest whom Mr. Trap, his bountiful host, was entertaining in the way of business.

He sat the hours away in a state of feeling, which throws its own wretchedness around it as a cloak, and broods moodily over sombre thoughts. That state of feeling which resembles the dull sensation which follows acute pain; and in which the mind no longer impatient under affliction, becomes at rest in its misery. He saw no way of escaping from his present condition, and liberty itself had few charms for him now. Mr. Burton had bidden him be of good cheer, and had promised to call on him ere the day was gone, but he came not, and Walter's miserable solitude was undisturbed.

Snow fell at night. It whitened the deserted streets, and loaded the bare trees in the silent squares; it fell on the churchyard too, and on a new mound that was there. The church

clock struck the lone night hours, the sound boomed over the graves, the snow fell still, but Lucy slept in peace. Unbroken was her rest, or dreams, no longer bitter ones, gladdened her sweet spirit now. She had passed from the earth—from the world that had broken her gentle heart: but a voice has spoken in the darkness of our mysteries, and has said that the meek are blessed, who die as Lucy died.

Next morning opened drearily. The window was loaded with snow, and the miserable room was fireless and disarranged. Walter got up and to his surprise saw his portmanteau on a distant chair, with a note on it addressed to himself. It was from Mr. Burton, acquainting him with the unsuccessful issue of a visit he had made in company with Mr. Woodcocke, (the quiet attorney who frequented the Lord Burleigh) to Walter's incarcerating creditor—as these origins of evil are called—and that he, Mr. Burton, would himself call at Chancery Lane early in the day. He had been captured in

Fleet Street the previous evening, by a messenger from a daily journal, at which paper, owing to the absence of a great part of its strength on an expedition of reviewing pantomimes, he had been engaged until an hour, at which he knew Mr. Trap's hospitable gates were closed.

Soon after breakfast Mr. Burton arrived.

"Well how have you slept?" enquired Pontius as he took a seat near the fire.

"I believe I slept well enough," said Walter, "but it is a wretched thing to waken here."

"Upon my word you are better here than outside to-day, we have nothing but frost and snow. Recollect you are not houseless, as many of our fellow men are this bitter day. Ah, come, they have made some improvements in this room since I was here last."

"What, have you been here then?"

"I have been in a great many places in my time," said Pontius, "and the less that is said about some of them the better. But time is

money, as our friend Mr. Swift says, although it is considerably under the standard value in a spunging house. This creditor of yours will give you no quarter, but such quarters as these, and notwithstanding the shelter they afford, for Trap's house is water tight, I will say that for it—I know from experience they are bad enough, and what is worse, remarkably expensive. You will have to pay half a guinea a day for the use of this cheerful apartment, and Trap says he only lets you have it at that price out of regard to me, as a person who has had dealings with him before; as he says he hopes I have always found him a gentleman; a thing I certainly should not have discovered, if he had not been polite enough to acquaint me with the fact."

"I shall not be able to pay that sum long," said Walter.

"And if you were, there are many pleasanter ways of spending money than on my friend Mr. Trap. Yet you must make up

your mind to remain here for some time, and when your creditor finds that you are getting resigned he may become more tractable."

"I have no means of paying forty pounds just now," said Walter. "Besides I have other creditors—yet if health is spared me I shall pay them all."

"No doubt of it—a little money for to-day, and a large promise for to-morrow will carry a man through a whole forest of creditors, when they know him to be poor; but we meet evils as they come, and not wait for assemblies of them. Meantime you must keep up your spirits. You can write your articles for the paper here, you will have plenty of leisure, and nothing to disturb your attention. Send out for all the daily papers, and keep yourself *au courant*, as the French, or our 'Gallic neighbours," as it is now the fashion to call them, have it—in regard to what is passing in the world—you will soon find yourself in writing condition. I shall get Mr. Swift to

obtain a few new books, which you can read and review, and I shall write the introductory leader, the opening address—I have done many of these matters for Mr. Swift."

"But who is to do the rest of the paper?"

"There is not much more to be done in the way of composition. The other departments, the drama, music, and the fine arts, in a paper like the Holy Poker, require nothing more than to be there, and to be as unintelligible as possible. If you had practice you might do the drama here. Last time I was in Fleet prison, I reviewed the theatres for two weekly papers."

"How the deuce could you do that, when you could not get out to see them?"

"No, but I got the playbills, and they answered just as well. But those matters I shall manage. You can do your part here very well."

"But the news. Who is to do all those

long columns of news which appear in a newspaper. I should think those alone would be the work of one person for a week."

"They are the work of one pair of scissors," said Pontius. "Fear nothing for the Holy Poker in that respect; it shall not want news, unless there should be a strike among the cutlers."

"Well I shall send out for those papers and do what I can," said Walter, "and when the books come, I shall read and review them—although I certainly feel it a very delicate matter for me to speak *ex cathedra* in regard to any author's work."

"The deuce you do," said Pontius. "Don't let Mr. Swift hear you speak in that way. Nay, you are a person of taste and education, and I have no doubt will do that part of the paper candidly and well. And now let me also advise you to look as cheerful and well as you can in presence of Mr. Trap. He has

a wholesome dread of sickness and death in his house, and the moment he thinks you are getting ill, you will find yourself translated to the Fleet before you know what you are about."

"I have a horror of the Fleet prison," said Walter hastily.

"There are worse places than the Fleet." remarked his friend, "although it is certain there are many better. It is even considered by some a respectable thing for a person, not in trade, to be placed there, for it shows that he has been trusted—that he has not yet arrived at the last stage, the bourne from which no credit without security returns. Some men, sir, talk of having been in the Fleet as a libertine does of his conquests. For my own part, I have been too poor, and too much removed from the seductions of vanity of late, to belong to the brotherhood the bailiffs prey upon. I am a stage or two behind their attention at present, and shall be so until my

circumstances improve. But you are not looking well."

"I am not very well," said Walter.

"Well; conceal it from Mr. Trap, that's all, keep up your spirits, and talkiug of spirits, send to the Judge's Head for anything you want in that way—it is a capital house. I wish anybody would employ me to write an article on the public houses, it is a subject on which I am ripe. And now, short as my visit has been, I must leave you—if I possibly can, I shall call in the evening. I shall not be particular about the hour, as I am sure to find you at home. Talk of a wife domesticating a man!—why Mr. Trap is better for that, than a whole colony of wives. Egad, there is no staying out at night here. And now good bye, don't offer to show me to the street door—there is a gentleman outside who might be afraid that the exercise would fatigue you."

Walter smiled, and shook hands with his

friend, who passed down stairs, speaking cheerfully to the servants, and calling them by their christian names.

The papers were sent for and read, the books arrived in the afternoon, and Walter began to read them too, kept up a bright fire in his room, smoked his mearchaum, and began to feel a little resigned. Mr. Burton called at a later hour, and put the merits of the Judge's Head to the test by partaking of some hot spirits and water, and Walter retired to rest that night more tranquil, than he had imagined he ever could be in such circumstances, and in such a place.

When he wakened next morning he was rather startled at hearing some one mutter beside his bed—

"He is wawkenin'—mak' us thankfu' for everything!"

"Guthrie!" said Walter, "what has brought you here?"

"Guthrie's ain legs," answered the other—"he is ower wise to pay for coaches and cabriolleys. Heeven direct a' our judgments!"

"You got my note I sent you the other day?"

"I did," said Priam, "and I cam hot foot to the Lord Burleigh, that house of licentiousness, but I could get nae tidings o' you there. The barmaid said ye was gaen into the country again, and Antony, as they ca' that misguided man, wha is there in the capacity o' a waiter, whan I asked him for the news about you to relieve my spirits, asked me if I would take it neat, or wi' hot or cold water. The man is mazed—I should na hae found you now, if I had na met a man that brought your portmanteau here yesterday mornin'—and a bonny place this is! Dear, dear! if ye had but ta'en my advice—or even sent for me the moment ye returned to London."

"Well, Guthrie, I am glad to see you," said Walter.

"And I may weel say I am glad to see you" said Priam, "mony an anxious hour had I about you. Will ye be thinkin' o' risin'?"

Walter got up and dressed, and Priam took upon himself the office of superintending the preparation of breakfast, of which however he refused to partake himself, until the other had finished.

"And now, Guthrie, said Walter, "what have you been doing since we parted?"

"I hae been workin' for my frien' Michael Gillespie, for the last sax months, for sma' wages; but then he is o' my way o' thinking in regard to the great question of non-intru—"

"Well, I think I know of something better for you, Guthrie; that is the reason I wrote to you to call on the person I named in my note —have you done so?"

"I have. I called twice yesterday, but he was out o' the way. I had hopes o' hearin' o' you frae him, for I could extract naething regardin' you at the Lord Burleigh."

"Well, this person is in want of a publisher for a paper, which he is on the eve of bringing out, and I have recommended you."

"And what, if I may ask, are ye ga'en to do?" demanded Priam.

"I too shall be engaged in writing for this paper."

"That would be another thing," said Priam gaily.

"I am informed this Mr. Swift will only give you a pound a week if he engages you in this capacity; so you had better decide if it is worth your while accepting, before you apply for it."

"Worth my while!" exclaimed the other, "it wad be a lang while ere I got a sum like that, frae Michael Gillespie or the Queen o' Spain. Oh aye, it will be weel worth my while, and I could solace you wi' my attendance at promiscuous times, if I had ye but out o' this. It is Mr. Flint's doing this—the diel

reward him for it! But we maun now speak o' your ain affairs."

"Never mind my affairs," said Walter. "They are past your aid now, Guthrie."

"I dinna ken that," said Priam, taking a gold watch from his pocket—"here is your ain again."

"Nay, nay," said Walter, "it was my gift, and you deserved more at my hands, put it up. Now I hope I am not to be disturbed by your obstinacy again."

"I hae nae need o' a watch," said Priam, "for now I pay my landlady regularly."

"And what has a watch to do with that?" demanded Walter.

"This watch," said Priam holding it up in his hand, "was a nest egg o' credit to me. When it hung in my room, my landlady's mind was tranquil if my bills were a wee bit in arrear, but now I am in a condition to pay her without its aid, and like to be better able,

thanks to you—ere lang, I hae something else to help us in making up the sum which is to be the price o' your liberty. Here is a bit bill I hae against that infatuated man Burton, which I hope it will be convenient for him to pay."

"A bill against Mr. Burton," said Walter, "what is that?"

"There it is," said Priam handing it to him.

Walter took the bill and read as follows:—

Mr. Pontius Burton,

To Priam Guthrie, Dr.

18—		L.	s.	d.
May 9.	To carrying a grindstone from Blackheath to the Railway Station, one mile and half at 2s. per mile - - - -		3	0
	To taking charge of it on the Railway to London - - - -		1	0
	To carrying it from the terminus at London Bridge to 26 Short Street, Mile End road		5	0
	To house room for said stone for 8 months at 5s. per month - - -	2	0	0
	Total - -	2	9	0

"What is all this?" demanded Walter, "does Mr Burton owe you this sum?"

"There never was seller sairer won, than the carriage o' that stone," said Priam, "but it would only agitate your mind to hear a' the particulars."

"Well, well," said Walter, "take your bill and the watch too, and call on Mr. Swift without delay. Nay, I insist on it. Now pray do not begin to pester me with your obstinacy as you used to do."

"Ye are my master," said Priam, "and maun be obeyed, but—"

"What makes me your master?" said Walter angrily.

"That which mak's few men your frien'," said Priam. "It's no a hard word that will separate us; and ye canna run awa now—Mak' us thankfu' for every thing!"

"If I am to hear any more nonsense of this sort," said Walter, "it will make me regret having sent for you at all. Now go away and

call on this Mr. Swift, and let me know how you have succeeded."

"I'll do that as in duty bound," said Priam taking his hat. "Good mornin', sir."

"Good morning," said Walter taking up a newspaper.

CHAPTER VII.

How Priam Guthrie became engaged by Mr. Swift, and how Mr. Buckhurst makes another debut on the duties of life.

Mr. Priam Guthrie was so fortunate this time as to find Mr. Swift at home.

"Come this way, Mr. Guthrie," said the latter gentleman, taking Priam behind the curtain, and accommodating him with a seat. "You are a Scotsman, Mr. Guthrie?"

"I am," said Priam. "Mak' us thankfu' for everything!"

"What's that you said, sir—make us thankful, eh?"

"Mak' us thankfu' for everything," said Priam.

"A capital remark that, sir, a capital remark that—have you any more of that sort of thing?"

"Oh aye," said Priam, getting confused, yet answering in the affirmative, without exactly knowing what Mr. Swift meant.

"Let me hear a few more of them, sir."

"Ehem!" said Priam, "I dinna just understand."

"Dinny understand—no, sir, that won't do; it is cold, too cold—the first was better, much better."

Priam became thoroughly bewildered.

"Do you know anything about newspapers?"

"Oh aye, I ken about peppers."

"Peppers," said Mr. Swift, "who the

devil spoke about pepper? I said newspapers."

"Oh aye," said Priam.

"Have you ever published a newspaper?"

"Published a newspaper, oh—aye!"

"What paper, pray?"

"It was na exactly publish I meant."

"Then what did you mean—be quick, time is money."

"And that's true—time is money: there's mickle truth in that."

"Well, sir, what did you mean?"

"I meant that I can publish a newspaper."

"There is not much to do," said Mr. Swift, only to count quires, fold sheets, and take the money."

"I could do a' that," said Priam.

"But have you no more of those interjections—what was it again—'make us forgetful of injuries?'"

"Mak' us thankfu' for every thing," said Priam, becoming perplexed again.

"Make us thankful for everything—upon my word," continued Mr. Swift musing, "that remark is as good 'as the liberty of the press without its licentiousness,' or *magna est veritas et prevalebit*—it would do to put under the royal arms."

"Guid guide us!" said Priam, "the remark is na sae kenspeckle as that. Heeven direct our judgments! there's naething in what I hae said, to—"

"'Good guide us'—'Heaven direct our judgments,'" repeated Mr. Swift, "and that word speckle, speckled—what was the other thing?"

Priam, who began to fancy Mr. Swift had lost his reason, looked uneasily at his rapid movements, and the narrow space in which they were both cooped, and inwardly determined, the moment he came a foot nearer his person, to seize him by the throat.

"What was the other thing you said; some-

thing about speckle," repeated Mr. Swift—"but never mind that now—time is money. I shall be happy to employ you as a publisher at a sovereign a week."

"Mak' it a guinea," said Priam, "a' thae words ye set sic store by, are worth an extra shilling a week."

"A guinea be it then," said Mr. Swift. "This is Wednesday, on Saturday the paper comes out. You must be here to-morrow morning by ten."

"I'm your man," said Priam, "but may I no hae a half hour now and then to visit a frien' in Chancery Lane."

"Chancery Lane—he is in the law then."

"Indeed he is," said Priam, "and will hae difficulty to get out o' it."

"Oh yes, you can manage all that. Well, you may amuse yourself to-day, Mr. Guthrie, in visiting the remarkable places of London, to-morrow I shall expect to see you here—I

shall prepare a scale for our advertisements, and instruct you in it, and if you cultivate those religious turns of expression, sir, we shall never need to take a single one under the scale price. 'Make us mindful—' what the devil was the first one?"

"What's your wull?" said Priam, thoroughly confused by Mr. Swift's rapid manner.

"That's another cold one," said Mr. Swift, "but I dare say it's moral, and we begin with the high church."

Priam was at his wit's end, and afraid to commit himself, said nothing but "oh, aye."

"Well, good bye, Mr. Guthrie, good bye, good bye, good bye. Cold weather, sir, going to have a thaw—time is money—let me open the door, it is stiff, and requires care on account of the glass." So saying he hurried Priam out of the office.

Next morning Priam went to his new duties duly. Walter found less difficulty in his task

than he had anticipated—as we all do when we are obliged to perform it—Mr. Burton had prepared his part with considerable care, and his opening address was written with apparent earnestness, and with much aptness for the occasion; and on Saturday morning the first number of "The Holy Poker" was issued into the world.

The sale was rapid, and somewhat extensive. The newsmen liked the title, and scrambled for quires—the walls were placarded with "Buy the Holy Poker." "Read the Holy Poker," and at night these words appeared on illuminated lanterns at the corners of the streets. At the doors of newsmens' shops, larger bills (Mr. Swift's composition) pasted on boards, appeared with,

THE HOLY POKER.

CHURCH and STATE.

THE OPENING ADDRESS.

The Irish Bishops. No Popery. The Puseyites.

DREADFUL RIOT IN TIPPERARY ONE OLD WOMAN SHOT.

The great Scotch question of Non-Intrusion. Farther particulars of the Church Rate excitement at Bethnal Green, and

SIGNAL DEFEAT OF THE VOLUNTARIES.

Crim. Con. Disasterous fires. A lady shoplifter. The Chartists and the Corn Laws. Diabolical seduction.

DREADFUL SHIPWRECK AND LOSS OF LIFE.

The China Question, and the price of tea. Mr. O'Connell, and Maynooth College. More frauds on the revenue.

LITERATURE, the DRAMA, MUSIC, and the FINE ARTS.

Births, Deaths, and Marriages. Latest news from the country. Sporting, and University Intelligence; and

All the news of the week.

Fiat Justicia. Price only Sixpence.

Mr. Swift was in raptures; the paper had sold well. Even on Sunday newsmens' boys assailed people coming from church, "Holy Poker, sir — Holy Poker — red hot this week, sir, Holy Poker, Holy Poker, Holy Poker—r—r!" and on Monday afternoon Mr. Guthrie had not a copy left in the office.

On the following day, Mr. Buckhurst's duties commenced. In the first number Mr. Swift had inserted a few advertisements legitimately obtained from some steadfast friends, and cut out from the daily papers a whole page of others, the parties advertising being of course wholly unconscious of the additional publicity thus given to their announcements. Mr. Buckhurst had to call on such persons as were advertising in other journals—carefully excluding those whose advertisements had been already used—and to shew the advertisement pages in the Holy Poker as a decoy duck; but as well as that, Mr. Swift informed him that he must apply to parties advertising new inven-

tions, schemes for Joint Stock Companies, and such like embryo matters, and promise them notices in The Holy Poker, which they or he might write out, extolling these various matters above the skies, if in addition to paying the scale price for their advertisements, they would buy copies of the paper, varying from fifty to five hundred, to distribute as circulars.

Honest Horatio started on his mission, in his new, drab, pea coat, not much exhilarated by the obligation of such duties, which he heartily longed to be permitted to pronounce humbug, but that was out of the question here, so he sauntered for some minutes on the pavement of the Strand, looking at the horses, mentally estimating their breed and action, and the probable sums they would produce at Tattersals.

All this was very pleasant, and all those reflections might be just enough, but the reverend gentleman saw that they could neither affect himself nor the Holy Poker; and he was now lavishing away Mr. Death's sovereigns under

hopes of their being replaced by those of Mr. Swift.

He bethought him of Mr. Unicorn, as the only advertising friend he had, and accordingly proceeded to that gentleman's shop.

Ganymede jumped at the proposal which Mr. Buckhurst bluntly explained—and handed him an advertisement cut out of the Morning Post of that day, beginning—" Mr. Ganymede Unicorn politely informs the Royal Family, nobility and aristocracy in general, that his unrivalled Extract of Cucumbers—" and so on. Mr. Buckhurst took the advertisement, put it into his memorandum book, and struck a bargain with Ganymede, who offered to take a hundred copies of the paper if a flattering notice of his discovery should be inserted. Mr. Buckhurst had no difficulty in consenting to such a stipulation, his only concern was in regard to who was to concoct the paragraph, but Ganymede soon relieved him of all appre-

hensions as to this, by taken off his white apron, and declaring he would write the notice himself; and they proceeded to the Lord Burleigh for that purpose.

Antony was summoned, cold gin and water was procured, the gas lights, although it was noon day, were set in glow, and the paragraph commenced.

"Now, Mr. Unicorn," said Horatio, taking a draught of his gin and water, and dipping his pen in the ink, "all right, go on."

"Very well," said Ganymede in much excitement, "begin 'Important to the public.'"

"Important to the public," said Horatio, writing it down.

"Or perhaps 'Important to the Ladies.'"

"Important to the Ladies," said Mr. Buckhurst, after he had altered the title.

"Or perhaps 'Valuable Discovery.'"

"'Valuable discovery' it is," said Horatio.

"After all I think 'Important to the public' is better, put it 'Important to the public.'"

"'Important to the public' it is," said Horatio, "and d——n me, if I change it again."

"Well then are you ready?"

"All right," said Horatio dipping his pen in the ink.

"We have much pleasure in announcing that a wonderful discovery in regard to the human hair—"

"Human hair—go on."

"Which has already created a great sensation in the upper circles—"

"Upper circles, drive away."

"But is that strong enough?"

"Oh yes, it is quite strong enough for that infernal balsam of yours—go on."

"No, I think considering I take a hundred copies, you might call it 'a blessed discovery.'"

"No—no, 'wonderful' will do."

"No, call it 'blessed'" said Ganymede.

"I'm d——d if I call it blessed," said Horatio, "it would be impiety."

"Another fifty copies if you call it 'blessed."

"I won't call it blessed," said Horatio stubbornly.

"Well then, 'we have much pleasure in announcing that a wonderful discovery in regard to the human hair has been made by Mr. Ganymede Unicorn.'"

"'Unicorn'—all right."

"Which effectually eradicates scurf or dandriff, and makes the hair curl beautifully."

"Curl beautifully," said Horatio, taking another draught of the gin and water.

"But is that all right?"

"Perfectly right. 'Makes the hair curl beautifully.'"

"It also makes hair grow on bald places, and on the whiskers of gentlemen."

"'Whiskers of gentlemen—'"

"And has struck us as much as being one of the most wonderful things on record, since the Gunpowder Plot."

"What is all this?" said Mr. Buckhurst, raising himself in his chair.

"The Gunpowder Plot," said Ganymede.

"Oh that won't do at all you know," said Horatio.

"It is too strong, eh?"

"A great deal too strong," said Horatio.

"Then, 'since the introduction of gas,'" said Mr. Unicorn.

"The introduction of gas, it is," said Horatio.

"It vitiates the acrid humours of the head."

"Don't say 'vitiates,'" said Horatio, "say eradicates."

"But then I have said 'eradicates scurf.'"

"Well, say 'disperses.'"

"It disperses the acrid humours of the head," said Ganymede.

"All right," said Horatio.

"Changes grey hair to its original colour in infancy—"

"In infancy."

"And is patronized by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent."

"Drive away," said Mr. Buckhurst.

"'This wonderful discovery'—you won't call it blessed?"

"No, I *can't* call it 'blessed,'" said Mr. Buckhurst.

"This wonderful discovery is a vegetable extract of cucumbers."

"Well, but you see, cucumbers are vegetables," said Horatio.

"Never mind that, put it on, for there is a feeling in favour of vegetables," said Mr. Unicorn, "as they are not deliterious."

"Vegetable it is," said Horatio.

"And for further particulars, see advertisement."

"And that's it all?" said Horatio.

"Yes, unless you think of anything else."

"Oh, I think nothing about it," said Mr. Buckhurst. "Let us have some more gin and water."

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the progress of circumstances of a melancholy kind.

Mr. Leopold Woodcocke, attorney at law, had a quiet way of doing everything—even of drinking port wine negus, and smoking thin cigars in the parlour of the Lord Burleigh; and aided by seven pounds, secretly obtained for him by Priam Guthrie, by pawning the rejected watch, and nearly all the money of which Walter was possessed, succeeded in procuring for his client, the mountain nymph sweet

liberty, one afternoon on the pavement of Chancery Lane.

Mr. Woodcocke had farther taken upon himself to receive the fourth-part weekly, of Walter's small salary, to create a fund to pay his creditors; and in the meantime, in the event of any further molestation at their hands, to employ it in defeating their legal intentions, by entering appearance for Walter in any other action which might be raised, and reducing persecution to fencing for time, and obtaining for his client the full benefit of the law's delays. Thus one immediate source of annoyance was removed.

During the latter days of his sojourn with Mr. Trap, his seclusion from the streets had been occasionally cheered by visits from Mr. Buckhurst, Doctor Antioch, and other gentlemen connected with the Lord Burleigh; and in spite of their uncongeniality to his habits of mind, he was pleased by their attentions, and even had his ideas of human nature improved

by the reflections which a contemplation of the characters of these strange men produced.

Walter now entered more seriously upon his new duties. They were sometimes of a laborious and distasteful kind, but there were others of a more agreeable nature. Like a young barrister who has got his first retainer, Walter felt a certain degree of excitement in exhibiting the power which was in him—his mind had rich possessions of unbroken ground, and he derived that healthy pleasure from the exercise of his faculties which labour gives. He gradually became conversant with topics to which he had hitherto paid but random attention, but having at his father's request, at an earlier period of life, made himself master of constitutional law—that most necessary and most neglected element of the proper education of a gentleman—he had no difficulty, after mastering their details,

in grappling with the busy questions of the day in the proper spirit of their discussion.

His writings gave Mr. Swift the most sanguine satisfaction, although he sometimes complained that they did not contain a sufficient number of approved newspaper phrases. Mr. Burton cheered and encouraged him, and cleared his progress of many difficulties.

Walter indeed had little that was pleasing to beguile his mind from his new duties. Employment kept his thoughts from himself, and it was only when they were so removed, that existence was tolerable to him.

And so the winter passed, and the spring came again. The town was full and gay, pleasure and suffering met on the flaunting streets, and life in London was one of action. The opera received its syrens from warmer lands, and the imperial forums were stuffed again with senators from Christmas country houses — tradesmen who called themselves fashionable, had carriages at their doors; and

the wealthy great gave fête after fête which the Morning Post recorded and announced to all the world. Yes, in India and at the remotest corners of the earth, these chronicles were read and with interest too. The court had its levées; and blushing girls escaped from the governantes' lessons and the poney ride, were presented in their new dresses at drawing-rooms, and read their own actual names with fluttering satisfaction on the following morning in the newspaper, which for the first time had interest to them; scandal's tongue was busy, and the mysterious Jews had their coffers disturbed. The parks were crowded, and one or two "fast men," lost their worthless lives in them, but next day the dash and tumult was the same—foreign princes arrived at hotels, and had their enlightened souls almost torn from their whiskered bodies, by the bustling hospitality with which they were assailed. Scottish peers got highland pipers to create odious clamour behind their chairs, when the strangers

feasted with them: old men at Greenwich and Chelsea hospitals, charity boys, and even the felons in Newgate, were compelled to minister to the rage for entertaining the illustrious strangers; and my Lord Mayor with his trumpeters, and gilded coach; his heraldic barge, and all his swans, was dragged into the vortex, and compelled to contribute his heavy quota to the roast beef magnificence of this great country.

But the glories in the same town with him, did not affect Walter Osborne, and what was worse, they did not much improve the sale of the Holy Poker. When its novelty passed away much of its charm departed, and Mr. Swift, in spite of all his exertions, had extreme difficulty in procuring funds to push it before the public. Overtures for its purchase were indeed made by various parties, but its name and character being a pet idea, he would not sell the copyright but at an exorbitant price. Salaries began to fall in arrear, all but Mr.

Guthrie's, as he had the means of paying himself and took rigid advantage of it. Mr. Buckhurst had desperately inured himself to his duties, and with the exception of occasionally knocking down an advertiser, and losing his memorandum book now and then, got on "very well considering," he also wrote the sporting intelligence in the paper very dexterously. Mr. Burton, who had now to attend to the debates in parliament for a morning paper, was repaid for his previous assistance to Walter by the latter's acquired knowledge, and did his part of the paper in a hasty, dashing way; and Mr. Guthrie attended to the debtor and creditor relations of his department in a manner which shewed that, like many of his sagacious countrymen, he had been endowed with the formidable instincts of an accountant.

But Priam did more than that. He assisted Walter in every way he could, would copy his manuscripts, sum up and check his weekly bills, and even took lodgings in the same house with

him—Walter now resided near the newspaper office—in order, as Priam said, that he might look after him.

Never had man a more faithful follower. By some mysterious association of ideas, Priam identified Walter's interests with his own, and was as much gratified by the latter's literary achievements as their author could be. Indeed he was more so, for Walter's elasticity of mind was crushed.

He would walk to Highgate on the mild, spring evenings, and wander about those peaceful roads almost enjoying the quiet greenness of nature around him, although their very influence was imperceptibly increasing the melancholy which was corroding his heart.

A load pressed on Walter's spirits which no effort could remove. The world had lost its beauty to him, and the communion of his own thoughts, even at their gentlest times, produced but that placid melancholy which come like pale moonlight on a troubled sea. He was

young indeed still, but all the seeds of his hopes had died in the ground, they had no harvest for him, and the broad field of mature manhood opened to him, as the desert does to the pilgrim, who journeys there to weep.

The heart alone can tell its own bitterness. The Eastern potentate who said, "all these things availeth me nothing so long as Mordecai the Jew sitteth at the King's gate," spoke a language which was nature's own. In his case indeed the feeling was perverted, but it was nature's still; and every heart, whether of the fortunate or unhappy, has its Mordecai mocking the enjoyments it might possess.

One vision, one bright hope—one being in this wide world had alone power to make Walter Osborne a happy or a wretched man. Youth, talent, and—trivial as they may look when recorded, yet truth will have it so—manly beauty, and the accomplishments which make old men prone to estimate such lost qualities at a higher rate than ever their pos-

session, if truth wrote their chronicles by the light which makes happiness the only blessing of our days—would be found to have afforded; all these, in spite of all he had lost, were Walter's still, and still he was dejected, and still his days hung heavily.

And secret grief began to write its lines on Walter's countenance. His cheek was pale, and his eyes, formerly so frank and joyous, were now melancholy even when he smiled, the open forehead was sad and thoughtful, and features from which youth's beauty had not passed, had a cold gravity in their expression, which would have better suited the look of later years.

Even his gait had changed. He had lost the free, buoyant step, and the light tread of youthful energy; when he walked abroad, his aspect made strangers feel that all was not right with one who at his years had such a guise.

And life, that mystery which escapes us

subtly, life itself was losing its strength with Walter now. He felt its elements sinking in his nature; and that gloomy repose, which is in itself a warning, stealing on him day by day. He looked sadly on nature bursting again in its glorious beauty on the world, and lonely places had a melancholy pleasure to him. From joy and the hopes of joy he turned away, the struggle for existence was now but a listless duty, and once a voice whispered to him in his secret heart, that he cared not how soon he was removed.

And other relations of poverty came apace. His clothes were sadly worn, and although even in such regard his aspect was still that of a gentleman, yet it was that of a poor one now. His purse was light, and his heart was heavy—the future had but arid hopes, and the present had no gladness for him. He longed for repose—for that which life cannot give, nor is found till life is taken away.

Even those who saw him daily observed a

progressive change; and those who watched it also saw that ere long the night which has no morrow here, would come upon him. In vain they strove to rouse him from his apathy; it increased day by day.

CHAPTER IX.

In which many things are told which it is important the reader should know.

Sir Edmund Arden had spent the winter in Paris, but returned with summer to Granite Hall. Mrs. Arden had weathered out the cold months in her mountain retreat; the Hindoos had suffered acutely; and even the stout coachman, obstructed in his vocation by the snow, which had come in storms of six weeks duration at a time, had been in a precarious state of health.

Katherine Brandon, although she never complained, was believed by everybody who saw her to be unwell; even the English maid servants complained of colds and rheumatism in their knees; but Mrs. Arden was in excellent health, as invalids generally are when everybody else becomes unwell.

The purpose of Sir Edmund's visit was now no secret. It was known that he had come to pay his addresses to Miss Brandon. Katherine was now her own mistress: and what was tantamount to that in any case was within a few months of two and twenty. Her father had last winter married again, and it was said would soon have new paternal anxieties, to gratify his grey hairs with pleasing sorrows to his ancestral vault; his second lady being Katherine's late governess; a young woman of active intellect and decayed family, who had, on her father's breaking his neck some years before, turned her attention to tuition, and to establishing herself in life. The worthy squire

was much too proud a man to make any enquiries after his daughter; and although Katherine wrote him a most affectionate letter on her coming of age—for then the young lady had no hesitation in informing him of her address—as well as a similarly attentive epistle on his birth-day, and another on his marriage, the stern county member had taken no post office notice whatever of these communications, but had directed all his loving kindness to his new wife, whom he sincerely believed to be a most exemplary person; and so perhaps she was.

The approach of two and twenty is an uneasy period for the best of unmarried women. Katherine had buried herself as it were under the respectable solitude of Mrs. General Arden's roof, and almost shrank from entering the world again.

Yet Katherine had no mind to lead the life of a recluse, her feelings had active sympathies which would render such a condition

irksome, and although the first hope of her heart was withered, the soil was rich, on which other hopes might grow.

To say that Katherine Brandon loved Sir Edmund Arden, would be to say what was not the case, and of course cannot be stated here, but it would be equally incorrect to affirm that she did not like him. His manner was subduing, his conversation almost charmed, and his knowledge of life, and all that belonged to it, interested her. "She looked up to him," to borrow an expression not yet belonging to books; and Mrs. Arden's attachment to her late husband's nephew, and the frequent commentaries which this attachment called forth, made Katherine almost esteem him as a worthy man, and the baronet himself regret that so much of the old lady's income was produced by way of annuity.

Sir Edmund was handsome too, and not too old to be of some interest to a woman, even if nature had stricken him a fool; but

Sir Edmund had no such immunity from the consequences of anything he said or did—he was a wise man, whose very imprudences had a genuine savour of the first natural duty of man to himself, however they might compromise his duty to others.

He was a person whom no woman, whom he admired, could exactly what is called slight. She might not indeed love him, but she could not say that he was a person whom it was impossible to love—she might even dislike, and perhaps almost fear him, but still he was a person whom she could hardly lightly esteem.

Katherine already knew that he had come to offer her his hand. His aunt made no secret of it, and evidently was pleased at the prospect of a union between her nephew and protegée. Lady Julia Ponderous made no secret of it either, and unconsciously aided Sir Edmund more than all the others, from being unable to conceal from Katherine her dislike to her on account of it; and Lady Felton, who was down

on a visit to her sister, rallied Katherine in a hundred pleasant ways, but always with a covert expression of felicitation on her having so thoroughly captivated one of the most accomplished men of the day.

Katherine heard all this, and her feelings were strange ones. She was not displeased, but she was not elated by Sir Edmund's attachment, and she looked to the future rather with fear than exhilaration. For the first time in her life she felt that she was an isolated being in the world. She had no mother, almost no real friend. Mrs. Arden loved her it was true, but she loved her nephew better. She was her own mistress, but the gentle instincts of her nature prompted her rather to lean upon another—it was a cold independence, and she had no heart for it.

She thought often and sadly of Walter Osborne. It would have been most welcome to her to have met him even as a brother, or a friend; but as this idea continued, she saw it was a most

treacherous wish, and painful thoughts followed this discovery.

Walter had deserted her, and she believed, loved another; hope had left the thoughts she had cherished so long, and they were now but painful memories.

There was a blank in her condition which the heart ached at. She was called on to think on the most serious act of life, and she had no guide, not even her own heart to trust to. If she looked deeply there, she only found regret; and the pleasure she could not help feeling at times in Sir Edmund's society, so far from realizing her former ideas of happiness, only made her feel more bitterly that they had been dreams. She was told indeed that they had been so, she read too that such they were; proverbs and precepts innumerable told her the same, but then her heart in spite of all received them coldly.

A twelvemonth had now nearly elapsed since she met Walter Osborne. His coming and

going was a mystery which had occupied and distressed her mind. She was exactly in circumstances to brood over an unfathomed thought, and this was one on which all her feelings were embarked.

She even occasionally asked the Grave-digger—who notwithstanding his dislike to the Hindoos, managed to cultivate Mrs. Arden's pleasure grounds and his own employment in them at the same time—of his nephew, and if he was still in Walter's service; but Simeon had heard from Priam that his master had gone he knew not whither, although he hinted it might probably be on a visit to some of the crowned heads of Europe: but of this he was by no means sure, and any tidings of him would be thankfully received. Priam's boasting however, could do Walter no further harm, as Simeon himself had seen him, and drew his own conclusions as to how matters stood. So now all that he could tell Katherine was, that his nephew had been discharged by his master,

(as was no marvel, added Simeon, that he should be discharged by any master) and that Mr. Osborne had gone no one knew whither.

All this only made the labyrinth darker in which Katherine's thoughts continued to wander until months and months blunted, at last, the sting of the memories of former hopes; and the occasions *of the present* began to exert an influence which they had not used to do.

Katherine's case was a common one. She saw all the brightness depart from early dreams, and circumstances almost compelled her to look now to a calmer destiny. And this is the wisdom of life. Katherine understood it to be so, but then she would have fain been wise with Walter Osborne, and not have learned the lesson alone.

For, if her past hopes had been foolishness, she knew he had shared them with her. He had, years ago, unconsciously opened his heart to her, and on reading it she had felt she was

also reading her own. It was rapture to the young, passionate girl to find a nature which gave reality, as it were, to her own dreams; she had built her every hope upon it, and it was painful to lose it now.

Yet Sir Edmund Arden was a most accomplished man. He could charm her mind, and almost pierce its secrets; he could, for the time, estrange her thoughts from every thing but that on which he spoke; and he could draw pictures of future bliss, which would have been exquisite to dream upon had their sunny light but fallen upon another instead of him.

Katherine too, had her "Mordecai sitting at the king's gate." Had her heart been unfettered it might already have been surrendered to Sir Edmund; and as it was he was not without a certain influence over it.

What was she to do? Katherine, with all her riches, was alone as it were in society, and society of some sort is woman's world. Her gentle and affectionate nature was too feminine

to be thoroughly self sustaining; her character was endowed with that tendrilism which fits its possessors to sustain others rather than themselves. A very woman, as Walter had justly termed her, a creature fitted to follow but not to lead—to cling, and clinging evince a more than martyr's devotion; self-forgetting, and becoming in heart and soul a portion of the man she loved, but standing alone, a being almost unfitted for this rude world of ours.

And Sir Edmund, what were his feelings towards her. There can be no doubt he loved her, but it was love after his kind. He was very much in want of money, and had the choice been allowed him of the wife without the estate, or the estate without the wife, he most assuredly would have preferred the latter. He even knew distinctly how her heart had been, and was affected towards another, and had Katherine not been an heiress he would, under any circumstances, with her feelings as they were, have disdained such a bride, but Sir

Edmund told his pride that he who marries a woman possessed of an estate worth seventy thousand pounds could hardly be called a victim in the relation of the mere question of preference. If she had loved another, it was clear —according to the ideas by which mankind adjust the economy of such matters—that the other had been the forsaken, not the forsaker, and if at any previous period of life she would have gladly have given her hand to this distanced rival, that—always considering the seventy thousand pounds—only made his triumph greater. In regard to the individual, this certainty lessened her value in his eyes, and had he embarked his whole heart in the venture, it would have formed a detached obstacle which would have made Sir Edmund spurn such a chase; but circumstances embarked this torrent of feelings, cares of a different kind levelled the romance of their picturesque channels, and subdued them into a great stream, fit for the purposes of the navigation of life.

Nay, more, he had made up his mind that after marriage he should retire again to the continent, and live for a year or two in the delicious region of Austrian Italy in the beautiful neighbourhood of a sunny eyed Countess who had in Paris believed he doated on her, and whose tumultuous heart was his very own.

And yet it may be, had Sir Edmund been in Walter's position in regard to Katherine Brandon, such ideas as these would never have entered his mind, although there can be no doubt that even then, had she lost her estate, he would have paused seriously ere he had taken on himself the holy ties of husband; could Katherine have loved him as she loved Walter Osborne, and had Sir Edmund been the only man she had ever thoroughly loved—had this been the case, and of course, the estate remaining to her, there might have been something of a chance that he would have made a good husband—but "ifs" and "ands" as the proverb has it, "spoil chapters;" and they certainly spoiled

any hope of much domestic felicity for the gentle heart of Katherine Brandon here.

For all that Sir Edmund was convinced that Katherine was a wife much to be desired, and he desired heartily to make her such. He saw the impression he had already made, he knew Katherine's nature perhaps better than she herself chose to investigate it for such a result, and looked forward to the realization of his just hopes confidently.

For some weeks after his arrival, although everybody else had spoken to Katherine of his being her suitor, he himself had said nothing to her, to justify such an inference. When they met at Granite Hall, when they walked in the gardens, or sat in the rich drawing-room, in which Agrippa was compelled to freeze his solitary evenings away; by the united tact of all present, Katherine always found herself by Sir Edmund's side, and his conversation ever formed a pleasing retreat from the tedium of the social intercourse

around her. Mrs. Arden hardly ever spoke of anything but of some pet London physicians, and the jewels of the Nabob of Arcot. Lady Julia expressed the langour of her existence very elegantly, and Lady Felton had her busy mind stored with the latest records of fashionable life. In such society Agrippa seldom dared to speak, and Katherine cared little to listen; so Sir Edmund's society became more and more welcome to her.

But the day came at last when the patient baronet was to speak in language of another kind. It was a balmy July day, and he had ridden over to dine with his respectable aunt; it being a fête day, poor body, with her, the anniversary of the date on which her departed husband had been made a C. B. The Hindoos got new dresses and dined on rice and curry in the garden—the coachman drank a bottle of Duff Gordon's pale sherry, in direct opposition to the apothecary's advice, but the heavy winded charioteer had the idea that nothing

but port could kill a man, as nothing but port had killed his master; and a better man than whom, he told the cook and housemaids as well as the "gardener lad," or a more straight forward gentleman never existed, for although he lost his liver early in life, he retained his heart to the last, and had it buried with him. The battles he had fought—and the other amiable things he had done, formed a theme of conversation in the kitchen all the evening, and even the Hindoos, who were naturally grave, danced a *pas des deux* on the square, brick slabs.

The dinner was over, and Mrs. General Arden, tired with talking, went to sleep in her chair, and Katherine and Sir Edmund went out to the grounds.

CHAPTER X.

In which Sir Edmund Arden makes a declaration of love.

THE sun was warm, and the voluptuous aroma of summer was around them—Sir Edmund conducted Katherine passively to the rustic garden seat, on which, some twelvemonths ago, she had told the secret of her heart to Mrs. Arden.

"Katherine," said Sir Edmund in his rich soft voice, "I have for the last few weeks been

playing a false character, and you have known it too."

"In what way?" demanded the other, becoming suddenly uneasy, yet subdued by the subtle influence of the voice and time.

"We have met as strangers—for what is termed friendship in the world, has but in few cases the thorough relations of friend—and yet I do think that even in these, we are friends, Katherine. Is it not so?"

"Oh, yes!" said Katherine warmly, "I am sure I have ever considered you my friend."

"You did me but justice," said the other, "but still I should do your penetration wrong, if I believed you did not know that I was more than that—Katherine you have long known that I loved you."

Katherine could not speak.

"You have seen it in a hundred things. I have often tried to conceal it from you, but I ever found the attempt was vain. I only tell you what you know, when I now declare it.

Yes, Katherine," he continued in the same rich, quiet voice, " I have long loved you, but better far better than any but those who know your priceless worth can know, and of that, sweet Katherine, you yourself are ignorant—I have loved you, as her who might more than atone to me, for all I have already suffered in this weary life—as the gentle star which yet could throw mild light, on a destiny hitherto a gloomy one—as a being for my worship and my pride. Nay, do not blush, dearest Katherine, even if you reject me, I am still your friend—if my words offend you, I shall never utter them again—I have not crossed your path to make you unhappy. No, no! But you will not despise me when I tell you that I have trusted my very life on the cast of a die—for the world reckons a woman's favour no more than that—I know that even if my homage should be spurned, you will not despise one who mistook his own merit so blindly, but who loved you so well."

"Despise you!" exclaimed Katherine suddenly, "Sir Edmund, I never could do that."

"I have ventured my hopes," continued the other, "on a field from which it may be, the gossamer creations of earlier dreams have not quite vanished yet, and where reflections of my unhappy past may even from my love take much of its worthiness away; but the heart alone can tell its own history, and that heart is wholly yours. And trust me," he continued, changing his finely toned voice, "trust me, Katherine, as your favourite author has said, 'there is much music in that poor heart, much fond music it never felt till stirred by you. And the chords of life have vibrated in its melody, and when it ceases, they will break.' Nay, gentlest Katherine, it is no crime to listen to me, for the greatest will hear the humblest speak. I know what I have dared to ask for. I have asked for the noblest prize which this world can give the worthiest; for

an angel heart, for a diadem of happiness—for the hand of a being whose love for such as I, is too presumptuous for a dream. But, Katherine, our life is one of dreams, and mine alas! have been bitter ones; but never did I feel my worthlessness so utterly until I knew, esteemed and loved you! To be worthy of you—to have your regard, to see one gentle smile of favour, hear one word of that attachment which alone can gladden me now, would change my nature had it been even vile. Nay, bear with me—but answer me without reproach, for all my hopes in life rest on the answer you will give."

Tears—they were actual tears—stood in the fine eyes of the speaker, as he uttered this.

"Sir Edmund," said Katherine, less agitated than she believed she could have been, "this scene is most painful to me—I fear it is wrong even to have listened to expressions of which I am unworthy, and—and—" continued Kathe-

rine becoming agitated, "I have only thanks, and esteem to offer for the professions you make. I will speak frankly," continued Katherine, while blush followed blush on her beautiful countenance. "I have not been blind to your apparent attachment to me, and yet—" said the gentle girl with tears rising to her eyes, and trickling fastly down her now pallid cheek, "this scene only distresses me."

Sir Edmund had not anticipated this, yet almost intuitively divined its cause.

"Katherine," said he, with that subduing earnestness of voice, from the influence of which she almost struggled to escape, but by which her feelings lost much of their natural energy, as it stole upon them—if memories of earlier visions (Katherine blushed deeply) if pictures which by their treacherous colouring hid the paltry canvas on which they were formed, if dreams of greater happiness than perhaps life can confer—those dreams which girlhood cherishes so fondly—have not passed

away, the odious task of removing them painfully, must not be mine. That, your reason and your pride must do. Nay, dearest Katherine, that impatient look is a harsh return for the frankness with which I speak. Even if you reject my love, surely my friendship cannot offend. I should not be worthy of your regard if I were not anxious for your happiness, and if I did not value it more highly than my own. If secret thoughts trouble that gentle bosom of yours, and if they are such as I may not share, at least believe, dearest Katherine, that would you but direct me how your happiness might be obtained, I would strive for it, though at the sacrifice of my own. I know that I am unworthy of your regard, but who is not so? the merit of others may better, far better entitle them to ask for it, but the love of none, Katherine, none!"

Katherine looked distressed.

"Pardon me," continued the baronet "if I continue to speak so, although it seems to pain

you now; for it is the part of a friend to do so. Do not mistake me, Katherine. You are on the very threshold of life. A day will come, when you will look back on this scene and smile at the pain it gave you. The bride that loves the best, weeps on her marriage day, and to natures, proud and sensitive as yours, even serious professions of regard must give pain at first."

Katherine said nothing, no matter what she thought.

"Such feelings as these," continued Sir Edmund with much candid earnestness of tone, "must not influence you now, to cheat your own reason. Nay that proud look is ungracious here. I speak now as your friend, as your friend alone—as a friend would speak who knew me not. Do me justice, my proud Katherine. I have spoken frankly as a man should speak to the woman he loves the best—to the woman whom his heart cleaves to, and reason supports the homage which he pays—

to one who alone can make life a blessing to me—to one whom the dearest wish of my existence is to be worthy to make happy. Do not tremble, gentle one, if now you feel called on to decide on the most important act of your life—if your mind feels dizzy at the thought (Sir Edmund read her feelings most justly there, and those very words had more charm to her than all he had uttered yet), let me not extort your decision harshly—but tell me the time when I may be answered—let it be one month, or two months from now—but during that period let me visit you—let us take our walks and rides together—and I promise you I will not say a word of my attachment till my period of obstruction has passed. Let it be a month, sweet Katherine."

"Nay two, two months, Sir Edmund," said Katherine, in much confusion.

"Two months then—be it so. I am a slave, Katherine, who hangs his hopes of life on a behest. This day two months—it will be

an August day—this day two months I shall learn my fate. Come, you must not look sadly for it. For my part, my hopes rest fondly on your generous nature—but I shall urge them no further now—I shall even change the theme. My worthy aunt by this time will have wakened, and you owe me a victory at back-gammon. Let us join her, for we are the only persons in the world she loves. Poor, kind soul, how she does love you, Katherine!"

As they left the place, a head peeped through the hedge, and a pair of keen, black eyes followed them. Mr. Simeon Delvin gave a long deep whew! and sharpened the blade of a vicious looking, deer-horn hafted woodknife on the leathery palm of his strong, russet brown hand.

CHAPTER XI.

In which the Grave-digger discloses his wishes to Mrs. Dowlas.

The Grave-digger having pruned and hacked for an hour, with unusual energy, a congress of juvenile pines, put on his coat, laid his wood-knife in its sheath and place of concealment, and went straight to pay a visit to Elspeth Dowlas.

The town clock of Skerryton struck the hour of seven with a rheumatic effort, and

groups of children infested the "streets, roads, and avenues within, and leading to and from the said town." The mail coach glittered as it rolled along the sea side turnpike, and prudent men looked out of windows to see it pass; the rum-and-water guard, in his red coat and banded, dusty hat, drew out his long tin trumpet, and awakened echoes where a sound had not been; the idlers on the streets and at smithy doors, remarked that the horses' ears were covered to protect them from the flies, and that the mail was early that evening, no doubt owing to the fine weather they had had; sailors, with washed faces and blue jackets, glossy in their newness, walked a little way out of town, uneasily in their shining boots, with their sweethearts on their arms; members of the first circle returned to their dwelling places in phætons, after their afternoon digestive drives, full of commentaries on the crops; and a musician, with a mouth organ fastened in his neckcloth, a bass drum before

him, and bells on his hat, and tinkling cymbals at his knees, his countenance absorbed by the pressing exigencies of such complicated harmony, was delighting a middle aged man, and a crowd of children—some of them with hoops, at the entrance of the principal street.

Of the children, nothing need be said in the way of description, beyond that they looked very healthy and innocently dirty, but the man was the lunatic Hector. He had no other name—even his mother professed her ignorance of any other. Hector, he had been called in baptism, and Hector, he would die. He still wore the highland bonnet, worsted wig, and long, mourning crape band, with the military morsel of sackcloth twisted round his arm—the boys occasionally asked him the name of a new tune, which his experience in such matters always enabled him to tell. There he stood drinking in the music, and swinging his body with an attentive feeling to the tunes, until he saw the Grave-digger approaching,

when pulling his bonnet over his forehead, he hopped with energy towards him—

"Goode'n goode'n, Simeon, goode'n, Mr. Delvin—did you see the coach?"

"I did a' that," said the Grave-digger, passing on. But the lunatic accompanied him.

"Ony thing to be doin' in the 'yard the morn?" enquired the crazy amateur.

"Na na, Hector, thae are sair times lad."

"Tam Davidson's hearse is new painted," rejoined the other, "it will be a bonny sight the first time it's used."

"Aye aye, Hector, aye aye."

"And whare will ye be gaen', Simeon?"

"I'm gaen' to see Eppie Dowlas, lad; but gang ye your ways hame."

"Na na, Simeon. I'll e'en step into Eppie's wi' you—ye saw the coach?"

"Ay ay."

"And heard the horn?"

"Ay ay."

"Dear now—think o' that!"

Pursuing such intellectual conversation, the two gentlemen arrived at the gateway of a court of old buildings, in an obscure part of the town. Entering the place, two signboards stood before them. They were over Mrs. Dowlas' door. The one board had been made to her own order, but that which was below it, had originally been the property of a clock and watch maker, and the word "Repairs" Elspeth having caused to be blotted out, and "Night-watching" put in its stead, her notifications stood as follows:—

ELSPETH DOWLAS,

MILLINER.

N. B,—Grave-clothes on the shortest notice.

And on the lower board—

Night-watching neatly executed in town and country.

Two barbers' blocks without faces, but arrayed in widows' caps, stood *vis à vis* at the

window—the grave-clothes, the night-watching, and the widows' caps giving the place associations far from of a cheerful nature to the one sex, whatever they might have been to the other.

Elspeth received her guests with the usual ejaculations of welcome, informing Simeon in particular, that a sight of him had a beneficial effect on diseases of the eyes, and the three cronies sat down together.

"Aweel, Eppie," said Simeon, "and how is this cankered warl' using ye, my bonny lassie?"

"Indeed, Simeon, but in the auld way. A sair fight I hae to mak' twa ends meet, and tie them wi' a siccar knot. Have ye heard o' ony thing in my way?"

"'Deed I hae, Eppie, but it's no in the way o' death."

"In what way is't then, Simeon?"

"In the way o' love, Elspeth."

"Heaven be gracious unto us!" exclaimed Elspeth, casting a glance at her own reflection

in an oval mirror opposite, stroking down the creases of her gown, and looking at what the shoemaker had done for her. "In the way o' love did ye say, Simeon? But I had a dream last night."

"A dream, Eppie?"

"A dream, Simeon, as I lay upon my bed. A mighty dream. Will ye no weet your lips?"

"That I will dawtie, to drink your health."

"And sae will I," said Hector.

Elspeth bustled about in much excitement, and hot water, brown sugar, small tumblers, and a bottle of whiskey quickly appeared.

"Aweel now, Simeon," said Mrs. Dowlas after the Grave-digger had drank her health, and put his tumbler down with the air of a man in travail of thought, "what is this that has come to veesit my loneliness, at this hour o' the evening, in the way o' love?"

"Elspeth," said Simeon, "ye are a discreet woman."

"And that's true, Simeon."

"I ken frae experience (here Simeon sighed) that ye hae a knowledge o' the ways o' the heart."

"Dear, dear!" said Elspeth much flurried. "I am wiser than I was, Simeon, in that way. A douce discreet man, about your ain age now, Simeon; wi' kindly manners and a sagawcious head, would may be beguile me into thoughts which my better reason might not withstand. I have saved a penny mysel', and housekeepin' is a lone thing for a single woman. Tak' out your tumbler, Hector, and gang awa hame, your mither will be thinkin' ye hae fallen into the harbour, and the tide's in."

"Ehem!" said Simeon, anxious to lead his friend from what he saw was a false tack. "There's Sir Edmund Arden awa there at Granite Ha'."

"And wha cares for Sir Edmund Arden?" said Elspeth. "If he would daur but offer to kiss me."

"Saftly, saftly, Eppie, there's no great fear o' that."

"I should hope no," said Elspeth bridling, and looking at herself again in the glass.

"He'll be marryin' that bonny lassie Brandon ane o' thae days."

"And welcome," said Elspeth. "They are Erastians, man and woman o' them, thae English."

"I doubt this Sir Edmund is something waur even than that—but it's no the Erastian heresy thae I hae come here to speak about."

"Hector," said Mrs. Dowlas, "ye are a lang time drinkin' that drap punch."

"Let the boy be," said Simeon. "We shall gang hame thegither. Hear me, Elspeth, I need your counsel and advice."

"Ye may ever get them for the askin," said the lady.

"This Sir Edmund is a man that bears me sma' favour, but just as mickle as I bear him. It's only a week gone, that he bade that papis-

tical Frenchman that rides ahint him, to mak' me taste the lash o' his whip, for leavin' some fir boughs on his path—and but for my spawd the Moabite would hae done't. I would hae cheated the hangman though, had be been sae far left to himsel' as to hae obeyed his master. Now the lassie is bonny and good, wi' siller to spare, and setting aside her living wi' pagans and Erastian principles, would be a braw bride to ony man."

"May be she would," said Elspeth coldly, now seeing her error.

"Indeed she would," said Simeon taking up his tumbler, and after a draught, looking at its state of reduction in the light, and putting it down again.

"Weel, Simeon, and what is to come?" demanded Elspeth rather peevishly.

"Mischief I fear," said Simeon, "but that I would fain avert. There is a young man o' the name o' Osborne—he it was gave you the letter I gave Sir Edmund."

"And what o' him?" demanded Mrs. Dowlas.

"He has been kind to my nephew, Priam, who is an outcast, and an Egyptian, yet for a' that he is my sister's son, and blood is thicker than water after a'."

"A douce lad was Priam," said the crone.

"An outcast he is, and ever will be," said his affectionate relative, "a brand in the burnin'—a rampagin'—neer do weel—a land louper—and a disgrace to me and mine."

"Weel, weel, Simeon man, what's a' this to end in?"

"He'll come to an evil end, Eppie, its my mind—but ye see this lad Osborne has been his frien' and mair, and Priam is my sister's son."

"Aweel."

"The lad loes the lassie like the epple o' his e'e, and the lassie I'm thinkin' loes him after the fashion o' women, that is to say, loein' ae man on Saturday, and marryin' anither on

Monday. Now I would fain bring them thegither."

"A bonny task!" exclaimed the crone.

"He was doun here last summer. I drove him to Skerryton mysel'; and I saw them part at the cottage gate. I was workin' in the gruns. The tears were in the lassie's een as she passed me. There is something wrang 'atween them which I would fain mak' straight."

Elspeth shook her head. "That Simeon passes human power, wi' a man like Sir Edmund Arden. He has a seat in the saddle, and a cast in his e'e, that no woman's heart could withstan'."

"Is it sae?" demanded Simeon.

"Doubt it not," said Elspeth positively.

"Is there nae hope for the lad Osborne?"

"No a finger length."

"Are ye advised o' that?"

"Weel advised."

"It's a hard case then," said Simeon, "for the lassie, and for him."

"Every woman has a hard case," said Elspeth, "Heaven kens that. Our sex, Simeon are like the lillies of the valley, which to-day are, and on the morrow are in the hands o' the man wha' has plucked them, and who knoweth not the riches o' their value. Ye hae been a married man yoursel'."

"Ehem!" said Simeon.

"Our sex," said Elspeth, warming with the punch, "are like Sodom and Gomorrah."

"Rather like Babylon," suggested Mr. Delvin.

"Like Sodom and Gomorrah," persisted Mrs. Dowlas. "Shining are our pinnacles, and seductive are our pleasant places; but the spoiler cometh, and fire and brimstone are poured into our hearts."

"Aweel, Eppie, ye ken your ain sex best, but my mind is, there is sma' need for brimstone in your natures. My ain wife that's

dead and gone had plenty o' that commodity in a natural way. But is this case utterly past hope ?"

" Is the lad rich ?" enquired Eppie, crossing her legs.

" He was aince rich as ye was aince bonny, but," continued Simeon, shaking his head, " that's no the case now."

" I'm nae sae ill favoured that folks need shak' their heads at me," said Mrs. Dowlas with spirit.

" Ye are nae doubt comely; yet," said Simeon cynically, " my eyesight is failin' sairly, and your beauty looks a wee bit dim to me."

" But the mind, Simeon, the mind is after a' the great thing in wamman. I could repeat the hundred and nineteenth psalm without missing a word. I have read the 'Pilgrim's Progress' three times, and 'The Whole Duty of Man' twice. Show me ane o' thae flaunting

huzzies that beguile the hearts o' heedless youth, wha can say that?"

"A woman can say onything," said Simeon, "but dinna let us flyte when I cam' for serious advice."

"Then my advice to you is," said Mrs. Dowlas, striking her tumbler on the table, "to min' your ain concerns, and let ithers min' theirs."

"But ye see, there's Priam—so it's like a concern o' mine this."

"Priam Guthrie is a good lad," said Elspeth.

"A woman's praise is sma' commendation," said the Grave-digger, "but that is neither here nor there. I would do the lad Osborne a good turn, for he has been kind to ane o' my blood—although there never was kindness mair thrown awa'. What could I say to the lassie, for she comes to me often, and has skeel o' flowers, though she reckons choice seeds o' nae mair value than chaff? What could I say about this lad Osborne, to turn her heart frae this beguilin' man?"

"Say he has a power o' walth."

"I hae said that," said Simeon.

"Weel," said Elspeth decisively, "if that winna do, the thing is past hope."

"I doubt it is," said Mr. Delvin, finishing his tumbler; "evil will never leave the earth while woman walks on't. Hector, we maun gang."

The lunatic adjusted his wig, and put on his bonnet firmly.

"A kindly night's rest to ye, Eppie," said Simeon, "and mony thanks for your counsel, although there is ever sma' comfort to be got frae your sex's tongue."

"It's as true as gospel print," said Mrs. Dowlas, putting her hand on the Grave-digger's shoulder. "The lassie is but the pleesant flower that—"

"Weel, weel, weel, Eppie—good night, and mony thanks for a' ye have said."

"Good night, Simeon, and kindly rest to ye—ye doure auld blade."

And so the friends parted.

CHAPTER XII.

How the Grave-digger's worst fears are in spite of his efforts, realized.

A day or two after the unsatisfactory interview detailed in the preceding chapter, Mr. Delvin, being at work at his never ending, still beginning duties of wood and garden craft, in Mrs. Arden's well cared for grounds, Katherine Brandon happened to walk his way. The old man saw that she was pale, and that her countenance had the subdued look which

habitual melancholy gives. He guessed the cause, for Simeon, notwithstanding the deference which he had been disposed to pay to Mrs. Dowlas, on account of her presumed superior knowledge of those matters, regarding which the sex she was so bright a specimen of, are supposed to be so acutely cognizant. Simeon had his own ideas even on this subject, and the more he thought of the matter in those solitary hours of protracted labour, the more was he disposed to aid the cause of his nephew's friend.

"Pleesant weather, my bonny leddy—pleesant weather and balmy, to hearts at ease."

"Hearts at ease," said Katherine, hardly thinking to whom she spoke—"they, I fear, are rare things."

"And that's true. There is ae heart that in twa months time will hae need o' sunshine, for darkness will sit on't."

"And what heart is that?" demanded Katherine with some curiosity.

"The heart o' as braw a lad as ever lived, as kindly a nature as ever did good to his fellow men—pity it is he had na mair discretion as to the objects o' his bounty. He was down here this time last year, and left Skerryton, I'se warrant, wi' a heavy heart. But that love," continued Simeon, looking sagaciously on the blade of his pruning knife, "that love, it's my mind, maks mair heavy hearts than light anes."

"Of whom do you speak?" enquired Katherine anxiously.

"Even o' this Mr. Osborne, poor gentleman—he is poor enough I warrant now. Mony a question did he ask me about you, just as you hae asked mony a ane about him. Nay, ye need na look red for't, my winsome leddy, the lad loes ye weel."

"How came you to meet Mr. Osborne? demanded Katherine quickly.

"Ehem!" said Simeon, afraid to tell how

Walter had journeyed, lest it should lower his consideration in the lady's eyes. "I travelled wi' him part o' the road to Skerryton."

"And your nephew—is he in his service again?"

"My nephew is in the service of Satan. Heeven forgie me for taking the black name in my mouth, and I hope your leddyship will forgie me for uttering it in your presence. My nephew is, I ken na where—I have na heard o' him for months."

"And Mr. Osborne, have you heard of him?"

"Not a word, and mair's the pity."

"Why the pity?"

"Because ye are sae anxious about him," answered Simeon bluntly, "and he is I mak' nae doubt as anxious about you. He left Skerryton two days after he came. And they tell me at the inn, that he sat the last day in his room alane in great grief and perturbation

of mind. Dear, dear! but he will be a sorrowin' man in twa months," continued Simeon fixing his keen black eyes on Katherine.

But Katherine was past blushing now. There was sorrow at her heart too engrossing for the lighter emotions which but change the countenance.

"They say mankind was born to trouble," resumed Simeon, "and for my part, I ken I was born to sair wark; but that gentleman has been born under an evil star, if ever man was."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because grief was written on his face—because his words came like the mourner's, when he speaks by the grave closing on ane he loved—because there was nae blythness in his e'e, nor peace on his brow, though young and brent—because when he smiled it was like the light that fa's on the cauld face o' the dead. I hae seen in my time mony a sorrowing face—in my calling I see them aftener than mony

a ane, but never have I seen a countenance on which sorrow was deeper stricken than on his."

"Was it so?" said Katherine, not thinking what she said.

"It was even so, my bonny leddy, for an auld man may speak what ithers would conceal. That lad loes you, if ever man loed woman."

Katherine the sooner saw the impropriety of continuing the conversation, that no information regarding Walter Osborne, but the blunt ideas of the Grave-digger, could be gained from it, and she accordingly left the old man to follow his labour and reflections alone.

And Simeon observed that after that interview she avoided another. In vain he would give an occasional prefatory "ahem!" or "a blithe time o' day to ye, fair leddy," when Katherine occasionally passed his way; she never would pause, to gratify him by farther conversation.

And so weeks passed. Katherine's melancholy

encreased as the time drew near when her decision was to be made. Mrs. Arden spoke daily of her own happiness at the prospective union, and although Katherine only answered by her tears, yet she did not gainsay the old lady's hopes. She saw herself drawn onwards to a vortex, from which her feelings shrank, but her reason did not compel her energy to arouse in any effort to escape. Mrs. Arden, her only friend, assured her that she had just been the same for a month previous to her marriage with the lamented General, then only brevet major in a marching regiment, but that after marriage she was the happiest woman alive, as every widow fancies she has been, but rarely discovers till the husband is dead. She assured Katherine that her present melancholy would only enhance her future happiness—and Katherine could only weep.

And why did she weep? It was because she longed for peace—for rest; to think of her

own sadness unbroken upon by a prospect, which although it had no forbidding aspect in its own nature, yet her heart could not buoy her up to meet—because marriage, that brightest dream of gentle and affectionate natures, did not in prospect give her the joy she had in other years fondly hoped it would have done—did not as it were atone for the cares and anxieties—for youth, bright youth, has these—she had already experienced—because she had hoped for a happier destiny, than present feelings told her this could be. Because marriage would seal her lot in life and render her existence either most happy or most sad—and although she did not quite fear the latter, still the former was not what she had hoped it would be. But then she was told, these were feelings common to all her sex, and wisdom said they were foolish ones. But still they grew on her.

Her reflections in regard to old memories were again disturbed. She accidentally disco-

vered that Walter Osborne had been acquainted with Lady Felton, and intuitively guessed who the 'Clara' was to whom the letters she had read had been addressed. Nay, her ladyship made little secret with her own sex, of speaking of her conquests, and Katherine also learned that Walter had, for upwards of a year, withdrawn himself from her fascinating society. But then he had also withdrawn himself from her.

Yet had this discovery been earlier made, it might have exerted a different influence on her mind, but now—as Lord Byron makes Cain say of his father Adam—Katherine was "tamed down"—she had no one, not even an assured hope, on which she could rely, and the calls of the present were urgent, and required a mind under influences different from those which affected hers to withstand.

And still the weeks ran on, and still Katherine's cheek was pale, and her soft eyes melancholy. She would walk for hours alone by the

banks of that river side which she had at first admired so much, and the memory of the confiding hopes which had then engrossed her mind, made the anxious reality of the present more irksome. Sir Edmund sometimes walked and rode with her, but even he discovered that he had less influence in cheering her spirits than he had used to have. But this was natural now, and a thing which did not trouble him much. He saw a kind of passive apathy growing on her, but then whatever her feelings might be, her estate could not be affected by them; it was a very fine one, and his attorney's letters were of an urgent kind.

At length the promised day arrived. Mr. Simeon Delvin knew it well, for his calling and habits of mind gave him considerable aptness for dates. The day before, he had anxiously hoped to be able to speak with Katherine in a kind of forlorn hope of being still able to avert a result which it gave the strange old man much pain to contemplate; but Kathe-

rine, that day did not stir abroad. And on the next, the Grave-digger saw Sir Edmund arrive.

Mr. Delvin cut off good, promising boughs from very spleen, and getting into a cynical mood, like that of his great ancestor in the world, when his wife, like many another man's, had brought him to ruin, railed against the whole sex as the genuine origin of all the misery of mankind. He took snuff oftener than he had any occasion for, and to his great pain, let his snuff-box fall on the ground with the lid open—he cut his left thumb with his pruning knife, and blamed the order of creation, in introducing women into the world, for it all.

His worst fears were realized or rather his worst conviction, for Simeon was now in no mood to doubt of evil of any kind. In about half an hour Sir Edmund, with a bright look, made his bay horse fret on its champing course along the carriage drive, followed by Monsieur Auguste, who waved his hand gaily to Kathe-

rine's maid—and a moment or two afterwards Simeon saw the baronet galloping his highly mettled horse along the grey road that skirted a flanking green hill.

Katherine Brandon had consented to be Sir Edmund's bride.

CHAPTER XIII.

In which the reader is instructed in some elements of the anatomy of misery.

Hope seldom exists long without endurance, but endurance never exists long without hope; and the period came at length, when Walter Osborne's strength gave way.

He sank day by day; and at last lay on a sick bed.

A sick bed is a pretty term, with those who have the means of commanding its fitting min-

isterings; but to a poor man, it is a dreadful thing. The load which presses on the aching temples, sinks into the blighted heart; the feebleness which depresses the body, exerts an uncontrolled influence on the mind; the langour which enfeebles the senses, makes the spirits coil themselves in wretchedness, and long for the death rest which comes at last.

Yet the sick bed has its sweet sleep, a sleep that has more delicious repose, than those in health ever feel—for to all kinds of agony, gentle nature brings its pauses, and those hours to the sufferer are blessed. They are as the poor bread which the famished man banquets on; the cool shadow of the desert rock under which the pilgrim dies. The extremes of happiness and misery, are not always felt in their outward conditions, for slight things make the fortunate miserable, and pauses to the wretched, are bliss.

And so order in the apparent chaos of lots, has its evidence, and the ways of Providence

have tenderness in their justice—so the wind is indeed tempered to the shorn lamb, and the palaces of the bad are desolate. So truth would have a voice, would the ear, dizzy with the world's hasty tumult, but only listen—so pure philosophy would teach, were the purpose of our existence considered an important thing: so virtue would gladden the earth, and peace be whispered on the winds of heaven; so religion would have an active reality, and the spirit of our narrow days, be good will to all mankind. But it is not so. The red flames of an accursed state have shot their hellish radiance into the bosom of the world; and man preys upon man, while death laughs, though it may be the angels weep.

Life's course is a stormy one, and rocks are on every side; rocks lit, it is true, by beacons, but which we know not whether are placed there, to guide us from danger, or to lead us to harm—the flames of both shoot athwart the night, and we make the way weary by narrow

courses; because we will neither decide to trust completely to any, or to distrust both. When the ship is on the rocks, we look anxiously to the pure light, waning dimly in the distance, which we ourselves have made; but until then, we had deemed the beacon too remote for a guide; and the false lights were very bright, and shewed no rocks which it seemed unsafe to steer among. And although a chart was given us, by which we might have safely steered, still, when we received it, we inwardly resolved to look to the beacons of shorter ways; and only have recourse to it when these had failed. But then, unfortunately for our motly prudence, it is too late. The night passes, and the sun shines on us, only to shew how utterly we have missed our way—the breakers of death crowd around us, we say a few wise things, and die.

And still the chart is handed to new mariners, and still they receive it coldly—and so the world goes on.

If life is a voyage, surely there is but one course to steer—if old mariners tell us that the place we seek to reach is but a waste of waters, and that the sunny islands we hope to find there, are but visionary things, which dissolve as we approach them; why do we trust to such visions still? Because we will not suppose *ourselves* subject to the laws which affect our neighbour—because even he who has a mortal disease, would, if another, instead of him, had been afflicted by it, at once pronounce its true character, but thinks that in his own case it may be different—because, although all must die, and all repeat the truth, we never thoroughly *feel* that our life will have an end; not even when death jostles the physician from our bed side—because every one believes that a strange lot, a mysterious agency, which he will not enquire particularly into, must affect *his* destiny, differently from those of other men.

Other men die, and he lives; and he fondly

imagines it will be ever so—ask him, and he will tell you that he too must die, but he never believes it fully.

We all rise against a charge like this; but our actions prove it to be true. The dying man will conceal his treasure, which can benefit him no more—life is indeed a delusion, but to none so completely so, as to the wordling on his death bed.

Unless where heaven opens our eyes, there is a voice in man's heart which whispers to the last—"It is not so bad with me yet. I can still think and feel. The approach of the great change must be different from this." And so it would, if the mysterious power by which we live were only what we consider it in our independence to be.

Walter Osborne felt those pauses in his suffering, which nature asks and gives. Langour stole at times on his wearied spirits, and gave him that mind-sleep which is sweet as moments of rest are to the wearied body, and those quiet

influences which lead the mind from this life to a better.

The mouthy sage who wished to give effect to his manner of death, by going to eternity with a short, elegantly set speech in his mouth, spoke a truth by which nature, and *not* the religion, which he almost impiously called in for the effect of a record to his honour in later times—was illustrated. Religion indeed elevates and tranquillizes the mind, but the ease with which we can die, belongs to the tenderness of Providence in its mysterious provision for nature's decay. Death is not a difficult thing, nor has the approach of natural death the animal terrors with which men in health, in their ideas, clothe it—the mind indeed can, it is said, make the rack pleasanter than a bad man's couch of down; but that is but a sprightly saying, and as it has no evil tendency wise men let it pass. The mind can do much, and its condition is the general measure of our happiness in this world; but the body, in spite

of all that has been said to the contrary, has sharper calls than the mind can make. It is when the body is at ease, or at least not violently disturbed, that the influence of the mind for our happiness or misery has its full action; then, and only then. And so it has been ordered, and so it will continue—and so not only the last moment of agony is softened to us, but the weakening energies of life have their soothing states.

And Walter felt them now. The thought of all he had lost, all the wrecked hopes which had agitated him, and all the despair he had felt before, were now presented to him through a dimmer medium, and his soul was drawn nearer to better things. Had poverty but kept away, Walter might have died as calmly as ever death has been chronicled.

But poverty would not keep away; and its occasions at length usurped the place of other painful thoughts. As physicians give mercury to create one disease to drive out another;

the former, although more active, being more easily cured; so the daily stings of poverty to the helpless, soon make them think of no evil but that.

Poverty is sorrow's counter irritant—the few solitary shillings in the sick man's purse, are the quicksilver which stimulates the thoughts to an absorbing sense of one calamity; and which gives unity to the feelings which by their diversity had distracted him before. And this, heaven knows, can distract him enough, but stlll it is an evil he can see and measure, and which does not enfeeble the subtler parts of the mind, by running out the feelings to suffer in that hideous obscurity under which even reason falls. No, no, here it is; poverty speaks out, although in a bitter, still an honest tone; there is no averting its demands, even sleep cannot take them away; and the man, half dead, who hears them, must be stirring.

And Walter had to get up and write. With

a throbbing forehead, and trembling limbs, he had to write articles on the Irish Church, and give his opinions regarding British policy in India. At night, when tossing with fever, and anxious for sleep, he had to light his candle, and read such books as "A ten years residence in Ceylon," or the "Memoirs of the late Doctor Fibre, F. R. S., containing his enquiry into the causes of the milk in cocoa nuts," and now and then a prattling novel, without a page of earnestness in it; all about how the author—perhaps a man six feet high—had been "shocked" at the large hands of a vulgar man at dinner, with rings on his fingers—and called on the reader, and of course on Walter, to sympathise with his outraged feelings; or how "horrified" he had been, at seeing the said vulgar man so far forget himself, as to drink beer. Walter ill at ease, and with death hungry for him, had to read about "hot lunches," "nice widows," who gave "cheerful suppers," and were drawn about Piccadilly by

a pair of quiet horses with kicking straps. Walter, a gentleman and a man of the world, had to read in the silence of the night, about the "dreadful" mistakes made by persons at their meals, the want of arrangement in the progress of courses, and all the peddling matters regarding which people seldom *speak* but in yawns, narrations in any way, which Walter in his very soul despised—he had to read them then.

And Walter worked hard, and was paid not only poorly, but most irregularly: Mr. Burton also was so, and as he was a man only to work diligently, from the assured prospect of reward, he neglected the paper—wrote a parliamentary summary, and an abstract of the news of the week; for Mr. Swift, who owed him money, could not get him to do more.

But light shone again on the destinies of "The Holy Poker." A new writer started up in it, a writer of letters to the bishops, who signed himself, "The man that made the horn spoons."

Week after week did he stimulate a bishop by name, calling on him to assert the dignity of the mitre, which his friends in parliament had procured for him; and one elderly bishop, of an irritable disposition (to whom a copy of the paper had been sent) took it into his head to send a reply to the editor of "The Holy Poker," denying some of the assertions of "The man that made the horn spoons."

This only produced a violent phillipic on the unfortunate clergyman next week from "The man." He abused him right and left, and even said something against his wife; and the bishop's letter having been inserted in the paper, as well as the reply; both of which were announced in staring characters on the placards; the paper sold so well, that two extra editions of that number were required to be printed. Mr. Swift absolutely leaped for joy.

Not so however, the bishop. Goaded to temporary insanity, he replied in the Times, and declared his intention of having Priam

Guthrie (whose name, in conformity to act of parliament, appeared on the paper as the publisher,) whenever parliament should meet, summonded to the bar of the House of Lords, for breach of privilege.

Priam got alarmed at this, and secretly made enquiries regarding the price of a passage to America, but the affair shoved up "The Holy Poker," and kept it perpendicular, when perhaps nothing else could have done so.

Doctor Antioch attended Walter, and the other established patrons of the Lord Burleigh visited him occasionally. Walter would not allow the Doctor to do him any harm, and the other members of the fraternity, as he had nobody else to speak to, but Priam Guthrie, (who attended faithfully to him,) were not at times unwelcome to his weary solitude.

One evening, it was the very August evening mentioned in the preceding chapter—Mr. Burton called, and seemed more excited than usual.

"Well, how are you?" said he taking a chair near Walter's bed.

"I am not worse than I was," said Walter, "but I fear I am no better."

"Has Mr. Swift paid you anything lately?"

"But very little," said Walter, "my purse is almost empty, and my bills here are increasing, I hardly know how."

"It is always good to have something in one's purse," said Pontius, "were it but to preserve the rings—and bills always run up in a quicker ratio, than a man's money runs down —although Heaven knows that is quick enough too. But I have observed that you have suffered more from the consciousness of poverty lately, than from the other matters which have been the chief means of laying you where you are. Is it not so?"

"We are blind measurers even of our own suffering," said Walter, "but of all depressing afflictions, poverty I think is one of the most

tormenting; at least it is one from which there is no repose."

"And a good thing too," said Mr. Burton, "that it has come upon you, for I verily believe it has saved your life."

"It would be a difficult thing to persuade me of that," said Walter.

"Perhaps so, for the pharmacopeia of sensation is still unwritten, and no body cares to study it till it is forced upon him in his own case. And of our own cases, we are but indifferent judges at the best. But your eyes are dry and bright; and I fear to speak my errand to you."

"Pray out with it," said Walter, "for I assure you things cannot be worse with me than they are."

"That, thank heaven, is a saying, which is truth from no man's lips. Oh, yes, they might be very much worse, although there is no denying they might be much better."

"Pray tell me what you have got to acquaint

me with," said Walter, shifting himself in bed. "I can hear it very calmly, I assure you."

"No, no, I but come to prepare the way—here comes Mr. Woodcocke, and he has some questions to ask you."

As he spoke, the door was opened softly, and the gentle attorney taking off his hat, glided into the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

In which there are some curious disclosures of an important kind,

Mr. Woodcocke having been accommodated with a chair, and having made a few uncontrovertible commentaries on the state of the weather, rubbed his hands, and asked Walter if he had leisure to hear about business.

"Leisure!" said Walter, "I have enough of it here. But what business do you come about? I have no occasion to make a will, for

I have nothing in the world to leave, but a few debts."

"Well, well, we shall take the will for the deed," said Mr. Woodcocke facetiously, "the will for the deed, sir, the will for the deed. But Mr. Burton has this afternoon casually informed me, that you had dealings with Mr. Nathaniel Scrip, the broker, in regard to Spanish bonds."

"I don't know if they were bonds, or what they were," said Walter, "but he bought and sold for me ten thousand pounds worth of Spanish stock."

"Exactly—ehem!—don't be excited now."

"Oh, I'm not excited," said Walter.

"Spanish stock—graphic that, very graphic, and bought and sold in his own name—that is as if it had been a private affair of his own, eh?"

"Yes, he did. It was not to be a permanent investment."

"Exactly, but Mr. Scrip made it so—ha! ha! ha!"

"There is very little to laugh at about it," said Walter.

"Exactly—in his own name."

"Yes, in his own name, if any name was required—he invested ten thousand pounds in—"

"Spanish stock—not bonds—ha, ha, ha! very good, very. Mr. Burton told me the particulars. Well, sir, you have been cheated."

"What!" said Walter raising himself.

"Cheated, my dear friend—it is a common thing—excessively common."

"In what way have I been cheated?" demanded Walter.

"In a very simple way. You asked Mr. Scrip to buy in ten thousand pounds amount, he invested ten thousand pounds value, or said he did; but the fact is, he did nothing of the kind. He himself speculated to the tune of thirty thousand pounds in these funds, and

would have lost the amount, but for a very pretty device by which he has gained some twenty thousand by his imprudence."

"I don't understand a word of all this," said Walter.

"My good sir, let me explain it to you. When Mr. Scrip saw that he had ventured money in sinking funds, he recommended a few thoughtless clients to invest in them, and so apportioned his own stock, or said he did; but not content with making himself safe, at the expense of other people, he would make a profit on his loss; and made nominal transfers of three times the amount he ever purchased, by which, now with this sum of yours, he must have realized upwards of twenty thousand pounds, by declared losses on stock, which never existed, except in the imaginations of the people he was deceiving. Those funds fell from fifty to five, and Mr. Scrip had only to say he bought in for you at the one rate, and sold out at the other, to account for swamp-

ing your fortune. He understood your order well enough, and your open power of attorney too—sold out your capital in the British funds, and never bought Spanish stock for you at all—for that standing in his own interest, was already allotted, and more than alloted, as I have said; and he was too wise to burn his fingers with more."

"Is this the case?" said Walter.

"True bill," said Mr. Woodcocke. "I had, about six months ago, a client who had suffered nearly as you have done; and as he was almost insolvent, he gave me the management of his affairs. I made enquiries in my own quiet way, and by accident discovered that something was wrong, through an unfortunate man who goes about town in a state of Spanish mania."

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Mr. Burton.

"There is an elderly gentleman who haunts the city coffee houses, and as he has bad eyes,

is always pestering everybody whom he sees with a newspaper in his hands for 'news about the Spanish.' He comes to your box—pokes you on the arm with his spectacle case, and never rests until you have read all the Spanish news to him; and in short, is one of the nuisances of society. From this person I heard that he had lost his whole fortune, amounting to about seven thousand pounds, by Mr. Scrip's first nominal transfer of his own stock to him; and this knowledge I kept to myself, but turned to my client's advantage. I have a quiet way of doing things, Mr. Burton."

"Ay ay, but go on."

"Mr. Scrip seeing he had made what he called a mistake, returned me my client's money, begging the matter might not be spoken of, as irregularities he said would occur, but were serious things in his profession, where regularity was at a premium. I promised of course, that so long as I had no

interest in his affairs, I should not speak of any irregularity in his way of conducting them; but Mr. Burton has this afternoon mentioned the name to me, and by whom you lost your fortune; so upon that hint—as the black man says in the criminal tragedy, in which he smothers a woman on a bed—on that hint I speak."

"Mr. Scrip," said Walter thoughtfully, "was always considered a most trust worthy man of business. He is stock broker for nearly all the bankers in the county in which I was born."

"My good sir," said Mr. Woodcocke, "those gentlemen who are above suspicion, I have often found to be most suspicious persons. And Mr. Scrip happens to be one of them."

"And shall I get my money again?" demanded Walter.

"That is another thing," said Mr. Woodcocke, "but I hope you may."

"He will," said Mr. Burton. "Hang it,

Woodcocke, don't be afraid of committing yourself here. Not a doubt of it. You have set a ferret in the rat's hole. Woodcocke will get you your money. Why the deuce don't you tell him so?"

"Because I don't know to a certainty that I shall," said the attorney. "All that I know is, that Nathaniel Scrip, gentleman and broker, only had thirty thousand pounds in Spanish Stock, and to my certain knowledge he has made other parties lose fifty thousand by it, and you are one of those."

"What an infernal scoundrel he must be," said Pontius. "I have a great mind to send Mr. Buckhurst to him, if I should buy a horsewhip for the purpose."

"Wait till he has paid the money, my good sir," said Mr. Woodcocke, "and I have no doubt Mr. Buckhurst will make a very pretty case of assault. But he is no man of business any more than you are. You know a vast deal about bills passing through Parliament, Mr.

Burton, but nothing whatever about them when they have passed. Mr. Scrip may not be solvent."

"He is as rich as any of the city bankers," said Walter.

"They are all very poor," rejoined Mr. Woodcocke. "A city bank, sir, is a debt, a private debt, like that of our national credit—a very pretty surface affair—but don't probe, don't probe—eh, Mr. Burton?"

"Oh, I don't know anything about those things you know," said Pontius.

"A bank," contined Mr. Woodcocke, "is a kind of married woman."

"What the deuce is this now?" said Pontius.

"A married woman, Mr. Burton—a married woman, sir—you are not a married man as I am. I have four children—one of them has just got a tooth."

"But why is a bank like a married woman?" repeated Pontius, "what does your imagination mean by that?"

"My imagination, Mr. Burton, has not so many calls on it as yours, and therefore is not so likely to stop payment. Not bad that, eh—Mr. Osborne, eh?"

"It is very good," said Walter languidly.

"But why is a bank like a married woman?" said Pontius again.

"Because nobody knows its desperate character, but the partners, sir."

"A deuced poor jest—but have you serious hopes of getting Mr. Osborne's money?"

"Hope is only a serious thing to people who put faith in newspapers—eh, Mr. Osborne—not bad that, eh—Mr. Osborne, eh?"

"It is very good," said Walter again, "but as to the money."

"Ah, if you come to money—that's another thing."

"Did ever anybody hear such spring-wired talk, as this weasel of the earth indulges in, when people are in suspense?" said Mr. Burton angrily.

"Mr. Burton is a man of letters," said Mr. Woodcocke, "and thanks to the penny postage all letters are now post-paid--rather good that, isn't it, Mr. Osborne, eh?"

"Yes, but pray tell us about this money. I have a good chance of getting it again?"

"I never like to excite too high expectations," said Mr. Woodcocke, "never."

"Egad you are not likely to excite high expectations in anybody," said Pontius Burton, "but don't keep Mr. Osborne longer in a state of suspence—he is very unwell, and it may do him harm."

"Well then, come, I won't," said Mr. Woodcocke, being now satisfied with having thus far rioted in superior intelligence. "I *do* think I shall get the money. I *must* get it, and what is more, I *will* get it," said the little man of law, slapping himself on his crossed knees.

"Bravo, Woodcocke!" said Mr. Burton, "shall we go and get it now?"

"Not so fast—it is nearly seven o'clock—not a man in the city at this hour."

"Well, we shall go to his private residence. In a case like this, I would not lose an hour."

"But Scrip is not likely to have money there, and he might take the alarm, and run away. Where should we be then?"

"Running after him," said Pontius. "No, no, if he has no money in his house he must get some, that's all—checks—bankers' bills—I. O. U.'s, and a Bow-street officer in the lobby."

"Upon my word, Mr. Burton, you have a remarkably clear idea about the way of doing business. I. O. U.'s and a Bow-street officer. Upon my word!"

"Now for heaven's sake don't be getting unbearably wise again," said Pontius, "but speak like a man of this fallen world. You are keeping Mr. Osborne there most uneasy; see how fidgetty he has become. For his sake,

to clear doubts, let us set off to this rascally broker without loss of time."

"He may be out at dinner," said Mr. Woodcocke—"we must do things in a business way."

"If I could know the result to-night," said Walter, "I think I should feel less uneasy than I somehow do now."

"A client's instructions," said Mr. Woodcocke, "that's quite another thing. Let us go then, Mr. Burton; but you must wait for me in the cab when I go into the house. I flatter myself I can manage the thing best alone—or will you stay with Mr. Osborne here?"

"Yes I will—that is the wisest thing you have said since you came in."

"I have said some very good things though, Mr. Osborne eh?"

"You have, you have," said Walter.

"Well, good bye, good bye, gentlemen. I

go in search of Scrip, and take no scrip on my journey. Come, not bad that, either."

"Thank heaven he is gone," said Mr. Burton as he heard the street door shut.

"Do you think there is much hope in all this?" enquired Walter, putting his hand to his throbbing forehead.

"Indeed I do. Mr. Woodcocke is a first rate fellow at a matter of business, although, with the blindness of talent, he fancies himself better at a joke. He will I have no doubt—unless he is thoroughly deceived—make something of the affair—but you look flushed."

"I feel very feverish," said Walter, "but I shall be better I am sure, when I hear the result of all this."

It was however several hours before he did so. And they were passed restlessly by Walter, and even uneasily by Mr. Burton. Darkness came on, and lights were brought into the room, but still there came no tidings of Mr. Woodcocke.

At length, about ten o'clock, he arrived, and Doctor Antioch with him, who had met him at the street door. Mr. Woodcocke seemed rather flurried, and Doctor Antioch, who knew nothing of what had occurred, after feeling Walter's pulse, declared that he was not in a condition for any conversation with any body, and peremptorily desired Mr. Burton and the attorney to go home and leave him.

"We shall be driven mad, between law and physic," said Mr. Burton impatiently. "Now let us hear what has taken place, Mr. Woodcocke, and for the peace of your conscience in after life, give us no more jokes."

"I have got the money!" said the attorney, taking out a small packet of small papers, "and that is no joke to Scrip, whatever it may be to Mr. Osborne. Not bad that, eh?"

Nobody spoke.

"I had much difficulty," resumed Mr. Woodcocke. "Scrip threatened me at first with an action for slander—he spoke of actions to the

wrong man though—action! no, no, no. I should have actioned him—ha! ha! Mr. Scrip, ha! ha!—he thought to bully me, oh, yes; you will be recollecting now it wouldn't do, Mr. Scrip—it wouldn't do. I like a joke as well as any body—I'm a quiet man, but I don't like to be bullied."

Still there was silence, even Doctor Antioch seeing there was something important going forward, being now as silent as the rest.

"I am a quiet man," resumed Mr. Woodcocke, "and I like peace. Peace is a sweet thing. Nobody knows how sweet it is, until after he is married and has a family—so I explained that to Mr. Scrip, who happens to be a bachelor. I told him that nobody could be answerable for mistakes, as no man was perfect not even the Lord Mayor—that Mr. Scrip might make them, as well as some very intelligent gentlemen for whom I have the honor of occasionally acting at the Old Bailey—but quietly—I told him all this quietly—"

"Now do go on," said Mr. Burton.

"Mr. Scrip wished to sleep and wake on the matter, but my client's instructions and my own judgment happily coinciding—a thing by the way, which they seldom do—of course I could not comply with that, and told him so."

"Well, well, well, and what then?" demanded Mr. Burton. "But you said you had got the money?"

"Then I rubbed up his memory about an old mistake of his, concerning Spanish bonds. I beg your pardon, Mr. Osborne, Spanish stock—but you don't see the point of that. I told him that I had no ambition to investigate his books; what I wanted was, my client's money, with interest from the period at which this mistake had deprived him of it."

Nobody spoke—Mr. Woodcocke took snuff, a thing he seldom did but in church; and proceeded—

"Mr Scrip on reflection told me that

several mistakes had lately taken place in his office, owing to one of his clerks having had chilblains on his hands; and that perhaps this was one of them. Having no doubt at all about the matter myself, I told him so again, and hinted something about my public duty and so forth—but quietly of course—so, as I see you are all anxious, the result is, that I have got checks and bankers' bills—but no I. O. U.'S, Mr. Burton, no I. O. U.'S, nor Bow Street officers—rather a good thing that of Mr. Burton's—will do to mention at my club—and the result is," repeated Mr. Woodcocke, "that here are bits of paper, which will give my client to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, allowing of course a little time for going to the different places, the sum of nine thousand four hundred and fifty-four pounds, besides some odd silver, as per this memorandum. Mr. Scrip himself is going to call on you to-morrow, Mr. Osborne, and he requested me to state, that he was very sorry to hear you had been so ill."

Every body present congratulated Walter, on his restoration to comparative fortune; but Doctor Antioch, who saw that his patient had a serious accession of fever, begged that they would leave him to repose. Mr. Woodcocke was instructed to convert his monetary documents into cash, and deposit the amount—excepting fifty pounds, which he was directed to bring with him next day—at Drummonds, with whom Walter had had an account in his better days; and in a few minutes his visiters left him, with the exception of Doctor Antioch, who remained to prepare a sleeping draught, and revise in silence an article on the millenium, which he had prepared for Mr. Swift.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the progress of circumstances.

The fever increased during the night, but on the following morning Walter's wakening at a late hour, had a few gleams of comfort in it. The principle of vitality became, as it were, encouraged to arouse itself; the immediate depressing thoughts which had lately haunted him, vanished; and the constitution, as the strength of those mysterious elements of life's endurance are so vaguely termed—the consti-

tution, young, and naturally vigorous, rallied, and the mind became once more capable of sorrow or joy.

Days passed, and new hopes arose; narrow indeed, and far less exhilarating than they had used to be; but then a feeble light is bright in dark places, and his condition of mind had lately been one of thorough gloom. He derived sensible pleasure from the means now afforded him of requiting benefits; he saw the hydra head of poverty turned away; his faculties of mind whispered triumphs to him, even amid the bleakness which had come upon his future course; and Walter thought no more of death.

He rose from his sick-bed an altered man. The innate kindness of his nature, which his former fortunes had made slumber, except when called upon to exert itself; now went abroad; good will to his fellow men was active in his bosom, and the world presented an aspect to him, it had never done before.

He saw good in every thing. The sentence may be cavilled at, but it has a meaning which good men know. The weary, and the heavy laden with the sorrows of life, *no matter from what cause*—and on those few words hangs the test of that true charity which alone is accounted righteousness unto us—the fate of the stricken he was no longer disposed to seek for causes to cavil at, but for the means to relieve. Justice, fair justice, that respectable virtue which makes philosophy button up its bosom, and even benevolence which has never known the sufferings for which it feels, pass reluctantly by—that arrogance of conscientiousness by which under the paltry cover of the deceit of others, we deceive so grossly our better selves —all that dignified household virtue, with the dapper proverb of " be just," and so on at its back, had no place in the relation of false results with Walter Osborne now—the beautiful spirit of christian love—of that spirit of fellowship with humanity, which Providence, in its

vastest arrangement of lots, never intended to leave the human heart, now shed its influence over the feelings of this harshly lessoned man.

All he had suffered was sanctified to him—for surely the sweet spirit of christian love, which past suffering creates, is a most sacred thing—the meteor objects of former hopes, now stood in a light in which many of their tints grew wan, and life appeared in the reality which the lenses of the mind's enlightenment to the fortunate, never, or most rarely give.

And as has been said, new hopes arose with returning health, or rather old hopes awoke with their character changed. Not the wish to do good, for that was now an active feeling, rather than a contemplative hope—but the desire for exertion with which nature, returning to its vigour, always creates hopes to beckon such exertion on.

A field of action had most strangely opened to him. It had not been produced by the

romantic cravings for distinction over which the young imagination hangs like a gorgeous firmament, dazzling even reason with the storied glories of former days; but by experience in a sphere of exertion, better fitted to our times.

Walter had felt his own weight, a thing which it is the curse of many of our best endowed, that they have never done—he felt within him that power which forms, after all, the elements of the real ambition of life, and he longed to cultivate and exercise it more.

He was not now stranded on the press, as many a noble mind has been—he could command leisure to arm himself, and had the means of entering the lists equipped. A glorious privilege, as many an aching heart has felt—a most enviable thing to all who would fight ambition's battles, and secure something beyond the poor pay of hard service in the precarious struggle for that glory, which raises dust beyond oblivion's grave.

The thought of immortality is ennobling,

even of that immortality which lives but in a world like this—although there is another of a wiser and a better kind. Still the highest toned souls love it well, and the best arguments against it, have been by those who have sought for it, even by such crooked ways.

Nay, it is a worthy hope, and religion itself has a pleasing and useful support, in the thought that good men will bless our memory. Man cannot stand alone. It is not his nature to do so—and the martyr who dies in agony, has a hope mingling with the thoughts of paradise, that later days will do his fortitude justice with his kind.

That hope, that noble passion which exists in the youthtime of nature's great, arose again in Walter's bosom now, and tempered as it was, with hard truths, and one abiding sorrow which no change of destiny could remove, it burned on the broken altar of his heart amid the ruined images of former hopes. It could not cheat him from the occasional contempla-

tion of these, but still it revealed a path in which his condition, although the happiness he once dreamt of had deserted it for ever, had prospects which would at least make sorrow less irksome, by changing its character from that of master, to the phantom companion, which, with most men, it ever is.

A cottage in the north of Devonshire, was advertised for sale. Walter, accompanied by Mr. Burton, went down to it, and the place was purchased. It was a fair spot, and had been chosen by its architect happily. And here Walter resolved to dwell, and pursue his thoughts of ambition fitly.

Money in London is Alladin's lamp, and the place became equipped almost as soon as Walter had suggested his designs, and in a week or two he was to retire thither—to seek in the first place health and repose. And Priam Guthrie had already installed himself his squire, as decisively as he had done, when their prospects of pleasant days were further in the distance than now.

But Walter made not these arrangements alone. He had placed a thousand pounds at Mr. Burton's reluctant command, to be invested in any way which he should direct.

Pontius had his feelings of independence, which the higher order of natures ever feel most sensitively, when dealing with their more fortunate friends. He refused to accept of Walter's offering, although it had been most frankly made, and what was better, made in a way which showed that the recipient, by accepting it, would confer a welcome happiness on the giver; but Pontius could not get over his own feelings in a matter like this. He could only be prevailed upon to agree, that Walter should invest the sum, in the purchase of a share of some newspaper, in whose service this honest-hearted member of the press should have assured employment. Walter, as sensitive as himself, and entering into his friend's feelings with the *real* generosity of a kindred spirit, consented to this, and Pontius promised

to look about him to find an investment, which might be advantageous to both.

Mr. Buckhurst too was requested to discover some way in which Walter, by his changed fortunes, might do him more permanent good, than the temporary present he forced upon him. But here Horatio himself was at a loss. He felt he was only fitted to be a country squire—a very good profession certainly, but too expensive for Walter's limited means to provide him for. A good tavern in a sporting county would have suited some of his tastes; but then Horatio was by birth and education a gentleman, and although he secretly thought sometimes with much zest of such a thing, more accredited feelings always got the better of that; and the ex-rector was at his wit's end; where he had often been before.

Nor was Mrs. Wrey forgotten. She had now removed to a cottage near Hampstead, and Walter sent Mr. Burton—why he did not go himself, it would require some space to tell,

and it may be the delineation of feeling would be unjustly read. Walter, during the last few months of his poverty, had not called on Mrs. Wrey—for attentions easily bestowed by the courteous fortunate, have bitter associations to the unhappy. They are called the decencies of life, but in some of their relations the breach of them is condemned, but in the way that the *petit maître* of Paris found fault with the German on the rack, for the uncivilized noise he made. Civilization is a very fine thing, and attention to its requirements is not to be despised; but there are conditions which snap its gilded trammels, too earnest by half for the raised eyebrows of the silken good. Walter sent Mr. Burton to acquaint her for the first time of the real condition of the past, and with a couple of hundred pounds as an earnest of the future too. In more correct terms, he instructed Mr. Burton to assure the widow of his late friend, that her future should be his care.

"What good a small supply of wealth can do, when it falls on proper ground! Walter, even with what he had lost restored to him, was still comparatively poor; yet his hand was shedding bounty, and his heart forgetting himself. The charity with which we embalm the memories of the wealthy great, is often, in reality, but the absence of that niggardness which is too often allied to the good fortune, which, while it raises its victim on a golden pedestal, makes his heart cleave to the coveted metal which has elevated him there—it is but the listlessness to avarice, rather than the energy to do good—yet even that is a virtue, and a useful one, as a drone is in a hive, and truth compels the addition, that as the world goes, we must esteem those worthy, who did not all the evil they might have done.

And Pontius departed on his mission, and executed it too. Many tears were shed by Mrs. Wrey, and she secretly reproached Walter for having trusted such a matter to a stranger—

and perhaps he ought not to have done so; but so it was done; and Walter had his own heart's assurance for his motives, though his reason looked coldly on them—even Mr. Burton himself expressed opinions by no means in accordance with the feelings of his friend.

In the bustle of all this Walter began to feel a kind of happiness. But life's weather glass changes even in its summer time. The newspapers announced, under the title of "approaching marriages in high life," that Sir Edmund Arden, Baronet, on the fifteenth of that month, (it was already the beginning of September), would lead to the altar the beautiful, accomplished, and so forth, Katherine Brandon, daughter of, and heiress of, according to the style used and observed in such cases. And once more Walter's heart told him, that all he again possessed availed him nothing.

The autumn, or the worst features of autumn set in early. The days became damp and cold, and the leaves fell before their time. Winter

already sent a voice upon the earth, which said that the summer was gone. And the autumn is a season at which death settles many of its old accounts. Mr. Burton was observed by his friends to have changed of late. His eyes occasionally had a painful fixedness, and his memory failed him strangely, now and then. He complained of dizziness, of a throbbing on his right temple which never left him day or night. Head-aches to him were unusual things, and this was one which would not leave him. He imagined that it was but the natural derangement of a brain too often unnaturally stimulated, and looked with some degree of pleasure to the comparative repose, which the dawning of better days would enable him to take.

And he resolved to take it. Once get over the exigencies of the present, he resolved to reform his ways. He felt that his whole nervous system was relaxed—he required additional stimulants to keep it in exercise, all which inroads he hoped soon to have leisure to repair.

But the ugly symptoms continued. When he walked abroad he began to find his steps uncertain; when he leant forward to write, he felt that it was with difficulty he kept his head from falling; he would get up and walk about his room, but as the work before him *had* to be done, he made use of additional stimulants to enable him to complete it.

He saw himself approaching (more rapidly than he had deemed) that state in which not only the power of exertion, but the endurance of existence can only be procured by artificial means, and looked forward more anxiously than ever, to the time when he should be able to recruit the energies of nature, and to husband them in the duties of a wiser course.

Mrs. Wrey also read the announcement of Katherine Brandon's marriage, but a week later than Walter had done. She had lost the letter which Katherine had written to Lucy—nor in the presence of her own trials had she cared to read it. But now she sought for, and

found it. Katherine there had expressed all her feelings; her long cherished love for Walter Osborne, and her ideas of his desertion, which later events now made painfully intelligent to the widow. With the gratitude of her nature, and the impatience of her sex, she longed to set matters right between the lovers, although she feared it was now too late. Under the most favourable circumstances in which her woman's hopes could indulge, there was just time for the threatened result to be averted, for Katherine's marriage day was approaching fast. And too much impressed with the anxious hope of averting what she knew would be a calamity, she forgot the coil of circumstances in which Katherine was placed, and wrote a pressing note to Walter, begging him to call on her.

The day she did so was cold and cheerless. Damp winds blew, and nature was overcast. A storm was coming on, there was bleakness at noon day, and towards twilight the labouring breezes gave forth sullen sounds.

The neighbouring church clock had struck nine, and darkness had crept on the day, when Walter Osborne heard the postman's knock at his door. Two letters were brought to him. The one was from Mrs. Wrey, which he read without guessing in any way at the cause of the urgency she expressed; the other was from Doctor Antioch, informing him that Mr. Burton had had a stroke of paralysis, and was, he feared, on the point of death.

Agitated and dismayed, Walter forgot all about Mrs. Wrey's request, and rushing into the street, hurried to Mr. Burton's lodgings.

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr. Burton's death-bed.

Mr. Burton lived in the Adelphi. As Walter Osborne entered the descending street, leading to the place, he met a man carrying a coffin on his back.

There is something sickening in such a meeting on the pavement of a London street, when foggy night has set in. A funeral has an honest sombreness about it, but to meet a coffin at night-fal, although we bustle past it,

and fancy it has not affected us, still it does. It reproaches us with something we had forgotten—it gives a momentary tint of gloom to whatever had been passing in our minds—there is no escape from its influence—another week and such a man may be carrying ours.

It was a gloomy omen, and Walter hurried more hastily on. Mr. Burton lived in a house near the bottom of this street. He occupied an apartment looking out upon the river, a dingy view at all times, but in bad weather dismal. Walter knew the place well, for he had often been there.

When one is supposed to be dying the entrance to his house seems to assume a tomb-like insensibility which it had not before. The lobby was cold—the worn stairs were dark, and the approach to the room silent and forbidding.

He found Doctor Antioch, Mr. Buckhurst, and Ganymede Unicorn grouped round Mr. Burton's bed—Walter took Pontius's passive

hand, and enquired with a degree of agitation which almost choked his words, "how he felt," and "how he was." But Mr. Burton's eyelids hung heavily, and his breathing was already a labour to him. Walter's words fell on ears which heard them not.

There he lay on poverty's death-bed. Every thing around him mean, and his own aspect harrowing. There he lay, with the lines of mature age deepening the forlorn picture of his countenance, the features pinched and hard, the lips rigid, and trembling in the labouring action of difficult respiration—the cold death sweat on his forehead, and his eyes now and then opening with a kind of convulsive intelligence more hideous than death.

Walter again took his hand, and the eyes of the dying man brightened for a moment, but while Walter looked upon them, their expression waned, and in a moment or two their consciousness was gone.

Doctor Antioch busied himself about him,

with the mute zeal of one who performs a heartfelt duty—the landlady who had just come into the room, wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron, and asked questions of the medical man, to which he gave no reply; but the stricken man lay in prostrate apathy, his eyes now and then wandering from face to face, but too coldly for intelligence. His breathing became more difficult whilst his torpor seemed to encrease.

The appearance of the room might have formed a study for a painter—old books, a ruined table desk, which had once been of value, blurred manuscripts lying here and there, and a canary leaping from rod to rod in a cage —a creature which Mr. Burton had cherished with that desolate fondness which the lonely bestow. For many years this singular man had cherished that little bird—it would hop from its cage, perch on his shoulder, and feed from his hand. And Pontius, with all his cares, would cheer its warblings on his en-

trance, and whistle back its melodies again. And the bird and he were friends.

And now it was twittering in its cage, and striking its little bill coyly on the wires, and no one noticed it.

"How is he now?" enquired Mr. Buckhurst, who appeared thoroughly subdued by the scene.

Doctor Antioch shook his head.

"Do you think," said Walter anxiously, "that he may recover this attack?"

"I fear not," said the doctor, as he gently raised the sick man's head, which had dropped from the pillow.

Again there was silence in the room. But the wind without had risen, and long, moaning gusts came from the river. They continued and encreased—bursting now and then into chilly whoops, which fell on the ear painfully.

"How is he now?" enquired Mr. Buckhurst again, as he observed Doctor Antioch feel his patient's pulse.

"He is sinking fast," whispered the party addressed.

"Where am I?" muttered Mr. Burton—"take this weight off my head! Don't bleed me more—my heart is sinking!"

There was silence again for a minute or two, during which the wind sounded continuously in long bursts and hollow sighs. Suddenly after a moment's silence it burst out into shrieking sounds—the windows rattled, small rain struck against it—the candle flames flickered from their wicks, and the watchers held their breath.

Mr. Burton began to stir restlessly—his breathing became more and more difficult, and its sound was painful to listen to. His friends gathered round his bed.

"He is dying!" whispered Doctor Antioch.

Walter took his hand again, and spoke to him. For an instant at times his eyes seemed to recognise him, but the next moment their expression changed.

Still the wind continued to rise, and the blasts from the river shook the window loudly. A low, subduing moan or two from the sufferer seemed to check the sounds of troubled respiration, which for the last few minutes had been continuous and encreasing.

"The house is up," muttered the dying man, "they are putting out the lights!"

Doctor Antioch bent forward, then turning round, said in a voice that froze the hearts of all present. "Poor fellow! he is gone.!"

And thus as he had truly said of others—thus he died, and 'poor fellow!' was Mr. Burton's epitaph!

CHAPTER XVII.

The marriage scene.

TIME does not wait for deaths or funerals. The sun rises as truly on the closed eyes of the corpse, as on the brow that life's hopes shine upon; and the evening falls alike on the death chamber, and the festive scene. "Death laughs," says the poet, "go ponder o'er the skeleton;" and death laughs louder still, for he who wrote this, is himself a skeleton now!

Yes, death laughs, for his banquets are encreasing ones, and the world bubbles its philosophy forth, but under his chariot wheels. The wisdom of men's days is but the stanza of a funeral song. Knowledge preaches in its chair, and death whets another arrow, and laughs again! It was a rare thought, though a bitter one, this "sad merriment" of the poet—for the world joins in the phantom's goblin mirth. The throng of life owe no fellowship with the dead—they push past the dead man's door exultingly, and join in the destroyer's laugh.

And so it was with Mr. Burton, and so it will be with us. Pontius died and was buried: he had his mourners, who regretted him for a time, and those who spoke in his favour, when they heard that he was dead. But he was gone—the wind had passed over him, and the places that knew him once, knew him no more.

But time, as has been said, does not wait for deaths or funerals—and the fifteenth of

September approached, and Katherine Brandon's marriage day drew nigh.

Katherine had deceived herself, and felt it in the anguish of her heart. Sir Edmund Arden had pleased her; it may be she had felt flattered by the regard of such a man; but as day by day the hour of her destiny came nearer, her feelings became like those of the doomed. She was still told that her uneasiness was only natural, and the same as that of other brides; but to this, even Katherine's reason responded coldly now.

She felt that her lot was cast, and strove to love Sir Edmund, and to forget another's name. But the very effort marred the result—"Walter! Walter!" she would cry at times, clasping her hands in the agony of solitude—"Walter, come and save me!" Then the next moment she would blush for herself, and deem those feelings weakness. And she would crush them too; for Katherine had an honest

heart. She had to look on Sir Edmund Arden as her future husband; as the man whose honour she was to respect, even in the associations of her errant thoughts. She would reserve no corner in her bosom for feelings which but give a plaintiveness to debasement, though only in regrets—she would love him truly, worthily, though the struggle should break her heart.

But the elements of the heart's destruction are within itself; it does not break from new duties imposed on it, but from the memories which remain. A broken heart has become a term of jest, but it does not merit to be so. The heart is the seat of life, in many more ways than one; and its actions have influences which the philosophy of nature respects, although the philosophy of the world has scouted them long ago.

And Katherine's health failed. Her full, deep eyes were melancholy to look upon, and

her very step had sadness in it. The well-loved poet of the land in which she lived, has truly said that no triumph of condition—

> — —"Can mak' us happy lang;
> The heart aye,
> 'S the part aye,
> That mak's us right, or wrang."

And Katherine, young, beautiful, and better endowed than the greater number of her sex, was more wretched than many of such, who earn peaceful rest, by the toil of conditions, which makes the chivalry of the world a lie.

Still, still, the marriage day came nearer, and Katherine's anguish encreased. She longed for a bosom on which she could rely—for a mother to direct her in the hideous aspect of events that rose like cold phantoms in the future—for a sister to whom she might unburden her heart.

She reproached Lucy Wrey that she had not answered her letter, and she reproached

herself again for those very feelings; for she was told that they were weakness; and her reason could not gainsay it, though her heart did.

And that apathy which slackens the springs of energy—that prostrate suffering which a short-sighted nomenclature often emblazons with the title of magnanimity—that death-sleep of the mind which is more fatal than all its anxious restlessness, encreased on Katherine as her marriage day drew nigh.

Pale she was, poor girl, and her beautiful countenance had an expression fixed on it. It was one which those only who have looked upon, and have understood its causes, can know. Put it in words and they are, "I live, because it is a duty." And duty is a fine thing—nay, it is a most worthy matter; but it is a sterile recompense even for existence, that casket which so many prize even when all its jewels are gone. Long life, health, even wealth are blessings, to the hope of which,

friend pledges friend—and they are the means, heaven knows, of much happiness—yet for all that they are of a negative kind—their absence is indeed wretchedness, but their presence is not always joy. Paradise had them all, yet the first man found it a desert, for one sweet tone of the heart gently ministered to, is worth them all.

And Katherine pined for this. She did not know that she pined for real happiness, but she knew that she pined for something, for which her heart ached. And in woman's heart there is much endurance—for let the one string vibrate, and all the others will be well. They may even be torn and lacerated, but while that one sweet string rings out in gentle pulses of melody, a charm will come there, even to sorrow itself. Katherine had all the sorrow, and this string was mute.—But still, still the time ran on, and the day dawned which was her marriage day. The ceremony was to take

place in the church—an amiable fancy of Mrs. General Arden's, whose English feelings Sir Edmund respected, as she had promised him a thousand pounds to spend during his honeymoon. Amid all his hopes of bliss, Sir Edmund had much respect for such a marriage present, and got Mr. Armstrong to agree to administer the ceremony within the walls of his granite built church.

And the day dawned, and the church bells rang gaily—the sun shone out, and gossips predicted that the bride would be happy. The church door was opened by Mr. Delvin in his Sunday suit, and it was observed by the idlers about the place that he seemed unusually ill-tempered, and ill at ease. A pretty fair assemblage of the beauty and fashion of Skerryton had come to witness the ceremony; and a crowd of persons, consisting of idle men of delicate health, and lazy habits, a few boys and girls, and three or four women with children

in their arms, stood about the church door, waiting for the carriages.

By and bye Mr. Armstrong arrived. He two was in bad spirits, and had cut himself in shaving. He rubbed his cheek impatiently, and kicked back from the church door a grave looking otter hound, that had ventured to accompany him. The clergyman then retired with Mr. Delvin to the vestry-room, to put on his gown, and read a newspaper, which he had had the foresight to put in his pocket before he came out.

The clerk came soon after, and putting on his spectacles with an unsteady hand, began to pore over the Register of Births. Mr. Delvin took snuff, and enquired of the minister regarding his mare. Whisperings were heard in the distant pews, and the noise of footsteps along the aisles.

At length a cry from the children without, announced to Mr. Delvin that the carriages

were approaching, and he walked gloomily to the door.

There they were, rolling along the sea-side road; three carriages with their harness sparkling in the sun. As Simeon watched them he saw an approaching post-chaise enter the sweep of road about half a mile behind the others. Windows were thrown up, whole families came to doors, the crowd became in motion, and the women nursing children, were evidently in a state of great excitement, which they partially relieved by dancing their babies nervously in their arms.

Of all the mornings that ever dawned on Katherine Brandon, this was the saddest to her. A night of anguish had been passed—which the aggregated sorrows of her whole life, until some months ago, would hardly have equalled —but it had been borne; for Katherine during that wretched pause, had only to suffer; but now she had to act.

When the morning came, and the early sun shone on her—when the hours, that in spite of all the misery she was enduring, seemed to number her moments of happiness—when the dreadful reality of a dreaded present fully came, she felt that she was indeed a victim.

Her ideas of duty remained, but their pressure now made her mind dizzy—she felt that she had been weak, and feared that she had been almost criminal, and that the hour of retribution was come.

She heard the bells ringing, and their sound struck painfully upon her heart—every peal as she listened to it, seemed to stir a pulse of agony—she could not look forward, and she dared not look back; the present, the dreaded time at length had come.

Mrs. Arden kissed her, and bade her be of good cheer—Katherine had her wedding dress put on, her maid admired her and it; but the bride was mute. She saw herself in the white array, and a vision of her coffin would have

disturbed her less. Her eyes shed no tears, and the expression of her pale countenance was calm, but a voice spoke tumultuously in her bosom, and asked her if all was not a dream.

Still the bells rang, and sweetly the sound came to the distance; still the sun shone and the beautiful views, so familiar to her, were as fair as they had used to be; and they only served to make the present more real, and coldly to show her the hopeless gulf at the brink of which she stood.

The carriages arrived, for the hour of departure was come. Katherine's stupor of mind increased. She suffered herself to be arrayed, and Mrs. Arden blessed her with a mother's blessing as she kissed her for the last time. Still Katherine shed no tear; and she was led to the carriage.

On reaching it she was observed to tremble, but Lady Julia assisted her in; the door was shut; coachmen and footmen all smiles and gaiety, nodded to the grouped housemaids, to

whom the event was of the most engrossing interest; and the carriages drove away.

Katherine's stupor continued till they reached the church door. Just as she alighted there, the post chaise already mentioned drove past, and Simeon Delvin recognised Walter Osborne, with an expression on his countenance which even startled him, glance out on the scene as the chaise passed rapidly by.

Katherine entered the church—the objects around her appeared dim and indistinct, and she trembled as she walked. The Grave-digger passed to her side, and whispered something in her ear.

Katherine paused suddenly, and seemed to stagger, but Lady Felton and Lady Julia assisted her on.

Another step or two and she hung heavily on their arms. She glanced fearfully around her, and saw the Grave-digger's keen, black eyes fixed on her intently, as he waited at the bottom

of the aisle. Her brain swam round, nature sank under the tumultuous struggle, and the two ladies had just time to support her, to prevent her falling to the ground.

Sir Edmund Arden, and two medical men, who came out of pews, rushed forward, and Katherine, amid much confusion in the church, was borne to the vestry-room. The windows were thrown open, the apothecaries made every body leave the room, with the exception of Lady Felton, who insisted on remaining; and Mr. Delvin on his own responsibility, announced in the body of the church, that no marriage was to take place that day.

This was a hint for strangers to retire, and Simeon, after waiting till they did so, shut and bolted the inner door.

Mr. Armstrong was bewildered, and the old clerk seemed changing into stone. Crowds stood without, speaking in anxious whispers—one of the medical men came out without his

hat, and entering a carriage, told the coachman to drive him home with all haste—this was done—the carriage returned at the same furious pace, and the apothecary, although many pressed forward to question him as he alighted, hurried without speaking into the church again.

About a quarter of an hour elapsed, and the crowd without heard the inner door being unbarred. Katherine, pale and deathlike, supported by Lady Felton and one of the surgeons, was assisted into a carriage, the rest of the group entered the other vehicles, and the marriage party drove away.

Mr. Armstrong followed. People touched their hats and asked him questions, but he too, hurried on without answering any body—the old clerk then came out meekly, but he was too much confused to speak. Lastly came Mr. Simeon Delvin, the only person who had a look of satisfaction on his countenance, and to him a horizon of buzzing questions was put.

But Simeon coolly locked the outer church door; put the heavy keys in his pocket, and telling all his enquiring friends to go home and mind their own business, proceeded straight to the Romantic Thistle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In which the aspect of Walter Osborne's hopes have the lights and shadows of an April day.

THE day after Mr. Burton's funeral Walter Osborne had received another communication from Mrs. Wrey, requesting him, in more pressing terms, to call on her. The startling events which had come so unexpectedly and painfully upon him, made him forget her first letter, and he now hastened to comply with the request of both.

Mrs. Wrey was profuse in her thanks to him, for the generous manner in which he had acted, and with some feeling, spoke of his having kept her ignorant of what his real circumstances were, until they were such as enabled him to serve her. The last calamity of her life had somewhat changed the widow's character. She spoke of Lucy; it was a painful theme, but it led to what was the immediate purpose of Walter's visit. He mentioned the cause of his inattention to her first letter, aud Mrs. Wrey was evidently much shocked at hearing of Mr. Burton's sudden death. But recovering from all this, she addressed herself to the subject in regard to which she had sent for him; and this with an impatient anxiety, which showed how much the matter had aroused her own solicitude.

She told him of Katherine Brandon's letter to her daughter, and insisted on reading to him that portion of it, which concerned himself. Walter felt and expressed repugnance to this,

but Mrs. Wrey would not be denied; and the struggle in his own feelings, agitated as they were, by the hints the widow had given him, was such as made those scruples lose something of their activity. At all events, the material portion of the letter was read.

A strange light burst upon Walter, but it was a most painful one now. The prize of life had then been within his grasp—the hopes he had cherished had been well and truly founded as regarded confidence in Katherine's feelings; circumstances, and circumstances alone, over which neither seemed to have had controul, had, as it were, taken her from him, and given her to another.

The thought was maddening. The knowledge of his own enduring devotion, the long confiding hopes which Katherine avowed—the reality thus given to every lost vision as respected feeling; it was very bitter to lose it all. Not that but Walter felt, even in that moment of impatient agony, that had he known

Katherine's feelings towards him, as minutely as now they were revealed—during the period when his condition put a barrier between them, which he believed his pride never could have surmounted, it would have served him but little; still it would have removed from his mind the cold, harrowing thought, which for months had dwelt in it, that Katherine's attachment to him had been but a flower to trifle with, and forget when it had faded.

And thus the intelligence only put another sting in Walter's bosom; and in the agony of the heart's bitterness, he reproached himself aloud for having for a moment doubted the purity and truthfulness of Katherine's feelings. But what were they now to him! The knowledge of them seemed to have come but to add new memories, to torture him with sharper torment than he had felt before.

But Mrs. Wrey reminded him that there were yet four days, till the fifteenth of the month, and that his presence might even at

the last hour, save Katherine Brandon from such a man as Sir Edmund Arden; with whose character she was not unacquainted. Walter saw but a poor hope in this—nay, in spite of the justice he had done Katherine's constancy a moment before, he began to doubt if her feelings might not have wholly changed, and if she had not surrendered up her heart to the crafty man, whose bride she had consented to be. Had Walter loved less, he would have doubted more—he would have seen even under the most hopeful state of Katherine's feelings something of weakness, in the relations of present position, for Walter could not have understood her situation fully—but his love was of another kind. It was that worthy passion which longs to protect, as well as to possess, to give happiness as well as to obtain it: to guard from evil as well as to obtain good. That manly passion, in which genuine kindness for the weak, does honour to the dignity of protecting strength—that sensitive

thought of another's weal, which even the enthusiasm of ecstatic hopes cannot blind in the bosom of the man, who loves woman as heaven has fitted her to be loved.

And although Walter saw but a poor chance of success in the hope which Mrs. Wrey expressed, and although he doubted if her heart was not now wholly surrendered to this new occasion—his feelings were not of a nature to make him fold his arms on the dignity of his own bosom, and say with contempt, "she has deserted me, for one who regards her as his victim." Walter's feelings were different from these, and even if the case were as he feared it to be, he would have been as anxious to have saved her from herself. He seized on the hope the widow persisted in holding out—he did so with the energy of despair. And then, could he but rescue her! could he find that she really loved him still; could he tear the iron of other thoughts from his soul—he had now a home, although but an humble one, to lead his gentle

Katherine to—he had the means of entering a new field of ambition, and the hope of being one day worthy of such a bride.

But the time was short, most short to give a chance of success to such a purpose; yet Walter, dizzy with a hope, so bright that he almost feared to cherish it, hurried off again on a journey to the north.

He travelled night and day; but the road was long and tedious, and the excitement of the occasion worse than irksome. Delays maddened him, and his most rapid progress seemed slow. Days passed, and still miles and miles were between him and the object of his hopes; but he journeyed without ceasing.

He arrived at the moment which might well be called the last, and the reader already knows the result up to then.

On arriving at the inn, heart-sick at the scene he had passed, and worn out with travel, and the restless fever in which he had endured the irksome progress of weary days; it seemed

to Walter that the state from which he had so lately been rescued, had returned to him again. But ere his mind had time to investigate the gloomy labyrinths of its own wretchedness, the Grave-digger arrived at the inn.

Mr. Delvin having, after some opposition from the servants, obtained an immediate interview with the new guest, required no intelligence beyond that which Walter's countenance gave, to become acquainted with the feelings which were preying on his mind; and bluntly communicated to him the events of the last half hour.

The sudden transition from despair to hope, produced a sensation in Walter's feelings which almost stunned him; and Mr. Delvin secretly blamed himself for having intimated a result, in a way more in accordance with his own satisfaction regarding it, than with a prudential respect to its immediate effects on another.

But Walter rallied quickly. Former trials had proved the endurance of a mind, which

when gladdened by a hope—in spite of the tumultuous feelings of a passionate nature—was strong and full of energy.

"He shall never possess her!" he burst out, "that man is a villain, and shall never carry ruin to the heart of such an angel as this. I care not for myself, but I will rescue her. When will this marriage ceremony be attempted to be renewed?"

"The lassie is in the hands o' the Doctors now," said Simeon, "and they hae as mony delays as the lawyers. They ken the moment she is married she is off and awa."

"Some time will elapse then?" said Walter.

"I should think ye may safely reckon on twa or three year at the least," answered Simeon cynically.

"Do not trifle with me, sir," said Walter angrily.

"Trifle wi' ye!" repeated Simeon. "I

trifle wi' no man—it were a good thing if the doctors could say the same. We are afflicted wi' five o' them in this sma' place. It is to be hoped our trial will be sanctified unto us."

"I must see Miss Brandon," said Walter. "Sir Edmund Arden has already taken a vile liberty with her name. Is the parish clerk still alive?"

"That he is. He is subject to lumbago, and I hear his appetite is failin'—but I think him a good life for a year or twa yet."

"I must see Miss Brandon," repeated Walter.

"That ye may find a difficult matter. She is now in mystery. The doctors will prevent that."

"I shall write to her—and if she can, I think she will see me. How can I get a letter put in her hands?"

"A letter. I might manage to get that

done; but her servant, a randy quean, that Sir Edmund showers gold upon, would stan' in the way."

"If he bribes her, I shall double the bribe," said Walter.

"Ay, but the rudas is under the power o' that man o' Moab—that papistical Frenchman. The Hindoos are dacent men for Pagans, but this French idolater is a locust of the earth. A bribe to the huzzy would be uncertain."

"I will make it such a one as she will hardly withstand," said Walter.

"Write the letter," said Simeon, "and I'll get the quean to put it into her mistress' hands, if she were at death's door—a thing a woman seldom is."

"Then here is my purse, and do not scruple to employ it."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Simeon compassionately, "but prudence is a rare quality

among the English. Put up your purse—I can better insure the delivery of the letter, and at infineetly less expence. I've but to tell the jawd that it's frae Sir Edmund Arden. Hech, sirs! but siller is a ready thing in the han's o' some."

"Take any plan you like, but get the letter put into Miss Brandon's hands. You have this day done me the highest service man could have afforded, and I will reward you for it richly."

"Speak no' o' rewards to me," said Simeon, "ye were frien' to Priam Guthrie, my sister's son, although sma' credit to—"

"You will get the letter delivered to Miss Brandon to-day?"

"I will," said Simeon. "The King's errand sometimes fa's to the beggar's trust, and though ye are neither a king, nor have I, or ony o' my blood, ever sought an amous; yet, the lassie will get the letter, in spite o' doctors,

and every other obstacle of which Satan—Heeven forgie' me for speakin' sic a word, wi' the keys o' the kirk in my very pouch—mak's sic ready use. The doctor's trade and mine are a wee bit opposed, but it's my mind they do me good; though, like the cats, a' the good they do is wi' an evil design."

Walter in the fever of the moment wrote a short note to Katherine Brandon, begging that she would grant him an interview on the following morning; sealed it, and gave it to Mr. Delvin, on whom he in vain strove to force, on his own account, some of the contents of the rejected purse.

"No," said Simeon, "no a bawbee in the way o' gift, yet, (glancing earnestly at the stored purse) if your honour's intelligence should think that a drive o' twa and twenty mile might merit a larger sum than half a crown—"

"It was worth a guinea," said Walter,

taking out the money; "but let me give you—"

"Mony thanks," interrupted Mr. Delvin, receiving the first mentioned sum; "but ye see ye hae already paid half a crown towards it." So taking a black leather bag from his pocket, he quietly untied its mouth, put in Walter's guinea, and taking out half a crown, laid it on the table.

"Nay," said Walter, "don't reckon in this way. Put up your money; or drink it, if you will."

"Half a crown's value o' whisky sagawciously bought, would hae killed Goliath of Gath in his brazen armour," said Simeon. "Na, na, I will accept naething in the way o' gift. The half crown is yours in a' honest reckoning, as it was paid, as I now hold it, to account. The feed o' corn ye gave the minister's mere, was your ain spontaneous act, and belangs not to this adjusting o' accounts. But leave na the

siller there, for the deludin' huzzies in this house that let drunk men kiss them, will pounce upon't. Put it into your purse, and lead na the randies into temptation, for it's a thing their sex canna withstan'."

Walter was disconcerted by this stubborn humour in a man whom he longed to reward; but Simeon coolly took the purse, and putting the half crown into it, laid it before Walter, put the letter into his waistcoat pocket, took his hat, and bade him good morning.

Walter that evening went to the clerk, whom he found suffering from a fit of acute rheumatism, brought about by the agitation of the day. Sir Edmund's letter, requesting his banns to be proclaimed, was duly searched for, and torn from a wire file of dusty papers; and with trembling hands, and spectacles on his "innocent nose," as Shakspeare has called this organic feature, the old man wrote out a

certificate of having published the said banns for the first, second, and third time; though not exactly for the last, as he had had to do it again on the preceding Sunday.

These documents Walter carried away with him, and took a walk about the harbour—then returned to the inn, and spent a most restless evening with himself.

Next morning the aspect of things stood in a harder light. Walter then doubted more than ever he yet had done, his chances of success in the desperate measure on which he had resolved. Pride whispered to him of repulses, and the quiet duties of the world going on around him, made him heart sick. His was no assured course—it was a forlorn effort at the best, and remembering Katherine's coldness when last they met, with the heart's waywardness, he almost shrank from doing so again.

But these were coward fears. His spirits

spurred him to action; and although a false result, he well knew would consign his feelings to worse torment than even yet they had endured; it was no time to waver now.

And so he set off to the cottage.

CHAPTER XIX.

And the last.

THE morning was calm. The country seats that dotted the scene stood in the retirement of their brown woods' shelter, with an air of repose, which gave them an aspect that rebuked intrusion. The cottage was there, with the sun shining on its walls, its closed gate, trim grounds, and the grey smoke rising from its long chimneys; it was a fair morning, and

yet it had something which to Walter's feelings seemed to fortalice the condition of existing things. Had storm, had the gloomiest state of nature thrown shadows on the day, it would have been better calculated to make him feel confidence in himself—it would have created that sympathy which is favourable to the earnestness of relation, which makes man herd with man; but the day was serene, and there was something in it that rebuked hopes which were founded on emotion, rather than on the established fitness, which gives routine to their progress.

He was a stranger, almost an outcast. He was to intrude the wildness of his own thoughts on a state of relation to which the world, in its most trivial deductions, still gives something of a sacred character; he was to break those iron chains which the pell-mell folly of life only hammers to more strength in the decency of rivets, which the very worst of mankind

respect, if they do not exactly honour; he was to bring in romance—as everything which an accountant and an appraiser cannot set a value on, is termed in these utilitarian days—to bring in romance to overturn a respected relation which is only reckoned a light matter in a ballad, but which, in its actual condition, has almost the fixedness of destiny; he was to do all this, that is to say, his hopes said so, but the protective character of the peacefulness of nature around him, these hopes struggled with, and lost their elasticity. Walter walked on, and doubts which, in the solitude of his chamber, he had deemed coward ones, had a reality now of a more painful kind. He did not shrink from the ordeal, but he approached it with diminished confidence. He did not doubt Katherine Brandon, he did not doubt himself, but fear came upon him; an indistinct dread of something which his mind refused to contemplate—a vague dread it was, yet more depress-

ing to action than the certainty of the worst result.

Could Katherine be rescued by a daring deed —could any venture in which life, or what to youth is dearer than life, had to be risked, been proposed to him, he would have chosen it exultingly. But there was none of such—it was of a character that made the hazard which even reason approved, forbidding he knew not why, but he felt it to be so.

As Walter reached the cottage gate, a gentleman, followed by a mounted servant, rode up to the spot by another road. A moment sufficed to enable Walter to see it was Sir Edmund Arden. Their recognition was mutual. The baronet checked his horse, and waved back his servant, who had thrown himself from the saddle, to open the gate. His face became suddenly livid, and his bright eyes glowed as he raised his hat with constrained courtesy. Walter returned the salute with feelings better

strung than they had been before, for the depressing vagueness which accompanies the unsubstantial purpose of an uncertain course, left them the moment he confronted Sir Edmund Arden, and the baronet required no further intelligence than the glance which met his own, to guess the nature of Walter's errand there.

"How do you do, Mr. Osborne?" said the baronet as he patted the glossy wrinkled neck of the restless horse he rode. "May I ask if your visit here is intended for me?"

"No," said Walter coldly, as he passed on, "it is not."

Sir Edmund made his horse bound forward, and he stood between Walter and the gate.

"I shall feel obliged by your acquainting me with the object of your visit here," said the baronet checking the fretting horse again. "You must know I have a right to make such an enquiry."

"I know of no such right," said Walter, "but whatever it may be, it cannot be better than mine to refuse to answer it."

"Mr. Osborne," said the baronet quietly, "I am not fond of turnpike road discussions, and I regret to be obliged to inform you that your presence here is simply an intrusion. Any communications you may have to make to any person in that house, must be made by letter. There is a sort of decency to be observed even to those who are rude to us, and I shall not hazard any conjecture that may be offensive, although another in my place, judging from the peculiar nature of our avowed sentiments in regard to each other, and my connection with Mrs. Arden, and her guest, might inadvertently add that if you have any acquaintance among the servants, they too are prohibited from receiving their friends there."

"Sir Edmund," said Walter as quietly as himself, though the passions of both were by

no means of that character, "there are few decent persons in any rank of life, whose friendship I should not respect considerably more highly than your own; but this is neither a place nor time for trying the temper of our wits. I pray you stand aside, for it is now the hour at which, in compliance with my request, I hope Miss Brandon will do me the honor to grant me an interview."

"Not in that house," said Sir Edmund fiercely. "Ay, or any where else, sir. Miss Brandon, of every person in this world, I have a right to protect from such an intrusion."

"If that lady is a prisoner," said Walter, "I have a right in common with every man to endeavour to procure her liberty—if she is not; from her, and her alone will I be answered so."

"Mr. Osborne," said the baronet, "I hope you will not compel me to convince you of the

folly of this, in a way which would be as disagreeable to me as it could not fail to be unpleasant to yourself."

"It would be a poor boast," said the other, kindling more and more, "to affirm that I am not to be influenced by any threat which you may make—but this trifling has continued long enough. I shall not willingly touch your horse's head, but if you remain where you are another moment, I shall hold it as an outrage, and treat it so."

A darker look came over Sir Edmund's countenance, but ere he had time to act, his horse was thrown violently on its haunches, and it was with difficulty he preserved his seat. His servant darted forward, and letting his own horse loose, stood before Walter and the gate, with a heavy hunting whip in his hand.

Walter was without a weapon—he was pale and thin. Monsieur Auguste saw all this, and

that besides in any question of force he formed an auxiliary on the side of two to one. But Walter, stung by this unlooked for opposition, was in the act of springing on the accomplished Frenchman—the heavy brass handle of the weapon was already raised above his head, and Sir Edmund, maddened by the shock he had sustained, was rushing forward, when a blow from a thorn staff, fell like the kick of a horse on the Frenchman's ear, and felled him to the earth. At the same moment Sir Edmund had his horse's bridle grasped.

"A clean stroke, Hector," exclaimed Mr. Delvin, raising his left arm to avoid any blow which Sir Edmund might be disposed to confer, while the lunatic hopped to the side of his prostrate adversary, and waved his cudgel over him. "This is the king's highway, and gentle and simple hae a free right o' passage. If you touch me with your whip, Sir Edmund, by the God who made me, I will lay you on your

back! We are three to twa now," continued Mr. Delvin, as Monsieur Auguste gathered himself up in the dust. Strike na the Moabite again, Hector, pitch defileth, and the law only supporteth an infringement o' the Turnpike Trust."

"How dare you touch my bridle," said Sir Edmund fiercely, "let it go, or I will lash you like a cur. This to your master, you thievish Scotch hind!"

"I hae nae master but ane," said Simeon, "and He is in heaven. This is the King's highway. If your whip touches but my little finger I will tear you frae the saddle, and set my foot upon your throat."

Sir Edmund had just sufficient command over himself to restrain his right hand.

"I am sexton o' the parish," resumed Mr. Delvin, still holding Sir Edmund's bridle with a grasp of steel, "and this is a kirk road. If the Papist does na lie as still as a graven image, smite him Hector—and spare not."

Meanwhile Walter who had left the disposal of matters to Mr. Delvin, heedless of the angry sounds that still came from the gate, reached the cottage, and in a moment or two afterwards found himself in the presence of Katherine Brandon.

She was pale and almost feeble, but her eyes brightened, her cheek became flushed, and her whole aspect assumed a guise of anxious animation on Walter's approach, and this so suddenly as to enable him to mark the change. His heart throbbed wildly as he took the small white hand, so helpless in its beautiful delicacy, for its gentle clasp told him that Katherine was saved!

The woman is blessed who is loved as Katherine Brandon was. It was no diplomacy of separate interests—no suspicious regard to the balance of homage—but the wish, the hearty passion to make her happy, and to do her good.

What is woman without a protector, even

from herself? what misery of heart have the iron laws of the feathery chivalry which makes woman perfect, brought upon the world? We are weak all; and yet the sex which nature has made the stronger, looks exactingly for more fortitude in the feminine beauty which makes fragility an element of love, than in its own case, in which the worship, with all the devil's dash of secretly acknowledged baseness, which it pays, seeks to be rewarded by the laurels of triumph, under which the lover, happy man, must smile compassionately on the poor one's love!

The woman is indeed blessed who is loved as Katherine Brandon was. Who is loved not in spite, but by very reason of her dependant state—who is sought to be protected, and the charm of whose affection is but the result, and not the cause of the tribute which makes her a part of the being who takes her to his bosom as a fragile thing. There are indeed, who need no such protective love, they are fitted to stand

alone, and it is heaven's blessing when they do so stand, but nature has made woman an inferior being only to be better loved.

And the chivalry which makes the nobler sex callously exacting of qualities to feed the selfish pride of possession, under the guise of a polished slave, is a sickly lie to the designs of God. The heart is never freshened by it; it is as tapestry put before the eyes that long to look on nature—man's place is a nobler and a better one, and the suppliant homage, pretty to pay, and sweet to receive, has falsehood in its character, which until nature consent to reject her laws, and adopt those of artificial life, no relation of condition can ever change.

What need of words in a scene like this? A look, a glance, a clasp of hand—so cold in their record—does more in reality, than all the trim sayings of meandering dialogue. Katherine was pressed to Walter's bosom, and knew that she was loved as she had wished to be. Walter, dizzy with joy, had no coined phrases

for her ear, and Katherine could only hang upon his breast and weep.

They loved, and in these words the story now is told. The errors of both were explained, the vulture arts that prey on the stricken heart, were made manifest, and Walter Osborne sealed on the parted lips of the woman he loved the best, the whispered contract which made her his own.

An hour elapsed, and Katherine conducted him to Mrs. Arden. They found her in tears. Sir Edmund had not suffered his horses to be taken from the door, but left her after a hasty interview. He had bidden her farewell, received the thousand pounds she had promised him—expressed his determination to accompany Lady Felton to London on the following day, and thence embark for the continent, to spend the winter in the north of Italy. He had spoken with much feeling of the agony of his blighted hopes, and how impossible it would be for him to remain longer in Britain, he would

carry his sorrows to another land, and struggle with them under a kinder sun. Mrs. Arden felt her nephew's disappointment acutely, and expressed her intention of removing to her house in London for the benefit of her physician. But her agitation at length subsided, she congratulated Katherine on her evident happiness, and even told Walter an anecdote of the General.

* * * * *

Six months had passed. The winter was gone, and the sweet spring came again. It was the evening of a fair day, and Walter Osborne and Katherine Brandon sat on an oaken seat, under the verandah of a cottage in the north of Devon. A garden, checkered with spring flowers, spread before them; a

green hill, with a hurst of beeches sheltered the place; a bright stream, one of those picturesque rivers for which this county is celebrated, skirted the grounds, and glided onwards to the silent hills. The sun was rich and warm, though its course was nearly done; and twilight was stealing on the hollows, though the sky was bright. The country on all sides had beauty. The long, broad based hills stood in the silence, blue and cloud-like; and far spread plantations gave repose to the scene. The wild bird was silent in the wood, and peace had come upon the world, ere the sunshine had passed away.

"Walter," said Katherine, drawing closer towards him, "how happy we are!"

"And how few can say that, but we," said her husband. "Heaven has dealt gently with us, my own sweet Katherine. We have both suffered much, but that suffering I feel has been a blessing."

"Its memory, Walter, can have no bitter-

ness to you, but to me it often has. I have been weak, most weak. But if you knew, Walter, how the knowledge of that weakness endears you to me—how thoroughly I look to you for support—how I venerate the holy title which makes you my monitor and my guide—how all that my life has to hope for, is centered in the wish to be worthy of your esteem. I think you would almost cease to regret the cause of the sad memories which the thought of past estrangement makes so painful to me."

"That which gives you pain, sweet Kate, can never be a pleasing thought to me. And the past must no longer have such an influence with you, for no one, kind heart, who knows your worth, could think harshly of any act of yours. We have both suffered, but past sufferings but enhance our present happiness. They do more than that. I am much changed, Katherine, since the days you had used to listen to my hopes. Had I not experienced

what I have done, I should be less worthy of you, and insensible, I fear, to many blessings I now enjoy. And you, dearest Katherine, have but learned a lesson, which though harshly taught, is almost worth its price. But let us speak no more of that. We have hardly known a sorrow since our marriage day."

"And I," said Katherine eagerly, "had never known that happiness was more than a vision, till then. Oh it is delightful to be loved! to be loved by those we love; to be loved as I know my Walter loves me. I would even change our residence here for the noblest place in England. This cottage is yours—no home could ever be so sweet to me as this."

"It would be a pity to remove Mrs. Wrey from Elmstoke Hall," said Walter smiling, "and Mr. Buckhurst makes you an excellent steward."

"We are happier here, Walter," said Kathe-

rine, laying her head on his shoulder, "than ever we could be there. Our past sufferings are indeed a blessing, for were life all sunshine, it never could have such happiness as this!"

"Life is never so, gentle one. Sorrows no doubt must still be ours, but if they fall not on our hearth, Kate, they are such as need not make us sad to think of now. Sorrows are on every side, and our means of often removing them from others, makes fortune a blessing, which I should have hardly known the fulness of, had I not known the bitterness of poverty, and how kind the poor can be. I have learned to despise no one on account of his condition, nor to judge of worth by the coat it wears. I have learned to think with diffidence of human errors, and to know that virtue often exists under the careless pageantry of folly, and that it lives with error often. And you yourself, dear Katherine, know well that all the happiness we now enjoy has been

procured through the rude gratitude of a strange man; whom, had we never known as we do, we should have regarded as unworthy of a grateful thought—for all we now possess, or, my blessed one, for the best of all, we are indebted to THE GRAVE-DIGGER!"

TH END.



T. C. Newby, Printer, 65 Mortimer Street







